

Alderman Peel High School

Market Lane, Wells-next-the-Sea, NR23 1RB

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students are achieving well, particularly in mathematics, and their standards of work are improving especially in English.
- Teaching is typically good. Some is outstanding. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to probe students' understanding.
- A wide variety of subjects and courses enrich students' learning. Many out-of-school activities, visits and visitors promote students' personal development and widen their horizons so that they develop into mature and thoughtful young people by the time they leave school.
- Adapted work and individual guidance for disabled students and those who have special educational needs help them to do well.
- Behaviour is usually good in lessons, and at times outstanding. Students also behave well around the school. They enjoy their time at school and build strong relationships with adults and other students.
- The excellent care that students receive helps them to feel safe at school.
- The school is led and managed well. A good focus on improving teaching and learning means it is getting better. Leaders visit lessons regularly so they know what is working well and where improvements are needed.
- Governors provide good oversight of the school's work and engage actively with staff and students to check for themselves how well it is doing.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work teachers set in lessons is occasionally a little too hard for less-able students or too easy for the more-able.
- Sometimes, teachers spend too long introducing a lesson or leading discussions from the front of the class. In these cases, students are not actively involved and this slows their learning.
- Teachers mark students' work regularly, but do not always give them enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- The school makes good use of the considerable data it has on how well students are doing but does not always analyse it well enough, for example to give governors a clear overview of students' performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, and many of these were seen together with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team made a number of shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as the effectiveness of support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs.
- The inspection team held meetings with two groups of students. They also spoke to students informally at lunch and break times.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. A telephone discussion also took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 58 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, in making their judgements.
- They looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on students' performance, the school's own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, safeguarding and behaviour policies, and records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work.

Inspection team

Gulshanbir Kayembe, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christine Mayle	Additional Inspector
John Mason	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than other secondary schools.
- The large majority of students are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium, which is extra government funding given to the school on the basis of the numbers known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school makes arrangements for a relatively small group of students in Years 10 and 11 to access alternative provision or work-related courses, such as horticulture and skills for life, on a part-time basis in other local institutions.
- The number of students registered at the school is rising and a much higher proportion of students than nationally are joining the school after the start of Year 7.
- There have also been significant staff changes since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post a little over two years ago and more than half the teachers have been at the school for two years or less.
- The school has a partnership agreement with the governors of a local primary school whereby the headteacher of Alderman Peel also heads up the primary school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to further improve students' progress by:
 - making sure that work in all lessons is set at the right level for the different capabilities of different groups of students, especially those who are more able
 - ensuring that teachers provide shorter introductions and include less whole-class discussion, so that students spend more time completing work on their own or in pairs and groups
 - developing marking so that written guidance always helps students to understand their next steps in learning and what they have to do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of data analysis and presentation to give staff and governors a clearer picture of the progress of different groups of students, across different subjects and year groups, to better inform their plans for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students begin school with attainment that is below national averages. They make good progress to attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages by the end of Year 11. Students who join the school after the start of Year 7 come from a broad range of previous educational backgrounds, but many arrive with low attainment or having underachieved in their previous schools. These students settle in quickly and make similar progress to the rest.
- In 2012, GCSE results in English and mathematics were in line with national averages. Current Year 11 students are on track to attain better results, especially in terms of five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics, and are making good progress across a wide range of subjects. Students lower down the school are also making good progress and achieving well.
- Standards are improving particularly well in English and science where, in the past, they have been lower than standards in other subjects including mathematics. Early entry to GCSE examinations in mathematics is used judiciously and only if students are ready to take the examination.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are very well supported, both in lessons by well-trained teaching assistants but also through the use of specially tailored programmes and, for those in Key Stage 4, accredited courses. They make considerable gains in learning, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Alternative courses enable less academic students to achieve well and to gain valuable work-related qualifications. These prepare them well for their next steps in life, and help them to continue their education or work-related training beyond school.
- The pupil premium funding is used very well to support those for whom the money is intended. A wide range of academic and out-of-school activities help to ensure that eligible students progress as well as their classmates, both academically and in their personal development. Consequently, the gap in achievement between students supported through the pupil premium and others is narrowing at a good rate.
- In most lessons, students are involved well in active learning and make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. In a typically well-taught mathematics lesson, students confidently developed their understanding of Pythagoras' theorem because they were given the opportunity to explore angles and triangles to work out for themselves how this theory works.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers routinely set clear targets for learning at the start of lessons so that students know what they are expected to achieve by the end. In most lessons, teachers also break down the targets into smaller steps for students to work through.
- Well-trained teaching assistants provide skilled support in lessons, often to less-able students, disabled students or those who have special educational needs. They know what the lesson is about and make sure that the students they are supporting maintain a good rate of work.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to ask questions that help students to think more deeply about their subject and to come up with ideas and answers of their own. Teachers also

use questioning well to check how well students are learning and the extent to which they have grasped important concepts.

- In the lessons that are less successful, teachers often spend too long introducing the lesson or teaching the whole class from the front. This means that students are listening for long periods. While students are very good at listening, this means they have fewer opportunities to practise subject-related skills, learn in a more interactive way, or learn at a different rate from others if the pace of teaching to the whole class is too fast or too slow for them.
- Where teaching is good or better, students are provided with well-structured tasks that help them to develop their skills and understanding. They are actively engaged, which they enjoy, and have good opportunities to work with others in groups or pairs.
- Students are not always provided with work at different levels to match their abilities. Many lessons include extension work to stretch the more-able students, and teaching assistants, where available, ensure that the less able do not struggle. In some lessons, the nature of the task is such that it can be completed at a range of different levels, so more able students produce deeper and more varied explanations while others give simpler and less analytical answers. However, at times, work is too easy for the more-able students, and very occasionally it is too hard for the less able.
- Teachers follow the school marking policy with reasonable consistency, and students' work is checked and corrected regularly across the school. They also provide written comments to guide students on their next steps. However, these are not always specific enough to help students understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have good attitudes to learning and engage willingly in tasks and activities in class. Disruption to lessons is minimal and students remain steadfastly focused on the work they are given. Even when asked to listen for extended periods, students remain well behaved. Students and their parents and carers agree that behaviour is good. Students new to the school settle in and make friends very quickly.
- Students are respectful to one another and to staff in the vast majority of cases. Occasional unacceptable behaviour does take place. It is recorded well by the school, which takes robust action taken to deal with it. The approach to managing behaviour is consistent and students know what to expect if they do not behave well. This has resulted in a marked improvement in behaviour and a considerable decrease in the number of exclusions.
- Behaviour logs maintained by the school record positive as well as negative behaviour patterns, and these are shared with parents and carers through the school's website. This has helped to improve communication between home and school, and has had a positive impact on behaviour. Assertive parenting classes also help to address students' needs, especially when any difficulties arise.
- The vast majority of students show a strong pride in their school. They are proud of their sporting achievements and keen to be involved in whole-school activities such as the forthcoming school production. Students were keen to show their admiration of the school choir during rehearsals at lunch-time, and watched and listened respectfully. In class and in out-of-school activities, students work very well together in teams and groups.

- There are very few racist or homophobic incidents. Students know how to identify bullying, including on the internet, through the safety training they have received. They respond well to the school's drive to make it a safe place for all. Students and parents agree that the school deals with bullying effectively on the few occasions when it occurs.
- Nearly all parents and carers, and all staff, agree that students are safe at school. Students are happy to come to school and this is evident in the average and rising attendance rates.

The leadership and management are good

- Though the school was judged to be outstanding in its last inspection, the achievement of students and the quality of teaching were judged to be good. The school has kept pace with national improvements in standards and the more demanding requirements of teaching and learning. In this respect it has continued to improve well, and in some subjects where teaching was weaker it is now much better. This is due to the good leadership of the headteacher and a sustained focus on continuous improvement.
- The headteacher and governors are ambitious for the school to be the best that it can be. Their vision for the future is communicated well to staff, students, governors, and parents and carers. The rising number of students reflects the school's growing reputation in the local and wider community.
- Many of the features that were judged to be outstanding when the school was last inspected remain strong, such as the care, guidance and support, the range of subjects taught, the wide range of out-of-school activities, especially in sports, and the opportunities for students to take responsibility and extend their wider understanding of the world beyond Wells. The addition of a choir, which involves many students across the school, is further strengthening their learning and personal development.
- The headteacher's role in leading the local primary school has strengthened links between the two schools. It is particularly helpful in promoting continuity in learning as students move from primary to secondary school.
- Senior leaders work well as a team to raise standards of work, and support middle leaders in their quest to continuously improve students' education. Subject leaders bring energy and enthusiasm to their work and are teeming with ideas to make learning even better. For example, the head of mathematics has devised a field trip in Wells to promote the everyday use of numbers and statistics. This has brought mathematics to life for students.
- The work of the school is thoroughly checked at all levels. Staff are given constructive feedback, including pointers for improvement, after leaders observe their lessons and check students' written work. The performance of staff is managed well, and pay rises are appropriately based on both the targets set for teachers and the progress of the students they teach.
- The school tracks students' progress well, and acts quickly to support individual students who are not progressing as well as they should be. The progress of different groups is also examined and compared with that of others. However, the resulting information is sometimes presented in a confusing way, or is not analysed well enough to show a clear picture of the progress made in different year groups and subjects. The use of more than one system to set targets and track progress does not help. As a result, governors, and staff to some extent, are not getting the clearest picture of progress to support their improvement planning.

- The school makes good use of the helpful support provided by the local authority. Its officers have been working with governors to support their roles, as well as with staff.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body takes an active interest in the work of the school. Its well-structured committee system allows governors to probe more deeply into different aspects of the school and check how well these are working. Effective training means governors are confident to ask challenging or difficult questions. They have an appropriate understanding of student performance data, although would find better analysis and use of one single system more helpful. Governors play a key role in setting the targets for the headteacher's performance. They receive regular information on how well teaching is going and take good account of performance when making decisions about teachers' pay. They are equally prudent about how other funding is spent and whether it provides good value. For example, they ensure that pupil premium funding is used in ways that make a real difference to students' learning and their wider development, such as funding one-to-one tuition or vocational courses at a local college. Governors meet their statutory duties, including ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are met. They review their own performance annually and use the results to identify further training needs.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121170
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	395650

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angela Morris
Headteacher	Alastair Ogle
Date of previous school inspection	June 2009
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