

Morecambe Community High School

Dallam Avenue, Morecambe LA4 5BG

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
16 to 19 study programme	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of day-to-day teaching varies too much. As a result, some pupils including those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability do not make good progress.
- Some assessment information is unreliable and not checked robustly.
- Money provided for the pupil premium is not well spent; the achievement and attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below that of their peers.
- Governors have not held senior leaders to account as stringently as they should. As a result, standards in some subjects are not keeping pace with national standards.
- While the majority of pupils behave extremely well, a small group persistently interrupts the learning of others. The behaviour of this group is not consistently well managed.
- Bullying is not always dealt with effectively.
- School leaders and governors recognise that achievement is not as good as it should be, particularly in mathematics.
- The 16 to 19 study programmes are well led and pupils who take vocational courses achieve well. Results for AS and A level are not as strong but pupils say they enjoy their learning and a high proportion go on to university.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has set a clear vision for the school's improvement and has an accurate understanding of current standards. He has brought in external expertise to support him in his development of senior and middle leaders.
- Attendance is improving due to the well-focused efforts of some senior leaders.
- Many pupils benefit from taking part in sporting activities and theatrical productions as part of a broader curriculum.
- There is some strong provision for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Pupils say they value the work of the learning, inclusion, nurture and care (LINC) centre.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good, particularly in subjects where standards are below the national average, by:
 - supporting teachers to provide effectively for pupils of different abilities, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - using a consistent and fair approach to behaviour management in lessons
 - capturing assessment information more regularly to quickly identify underachievement.

- Increase the accountability of leaders at all levels, by:
 - ensuring that governors continue to undertake training and provide effective challenge
 - using performance management more rigorously
 - insisting that all monies spent represent good value and have a positive impact on closing any remaining gaps in achievement.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The new headteacher is strong and decisive. He knows precisely what needs to be done to raise standards. He is aspirational, has high expectations and is honest and open in his approach. He is popular with staff, parents and pupils due to his tenacity and clear direction. Since his arrival he has acted swiftly to address the budget deficit. He has worked closely with members of the governing body to revise the school self-evaluation in order to reflect current standards. He has also brought in a vast amount of expertise from other schools to develop the skills and knowledge of senior leaders; this is already starting to have an impact on raising achievement.
- The quality of teaching and learning has declined since the previous inspection. This is due to weaknesses in leadership and management. The headteacher has begun to reverse this decline by giving teachers much better access to information about pupils' abilities so that they can use this in their planning. There are many new initiatives to improve the quality of teaching but there are a small number of teachers who still need help with providing effective lessons. Leaders and managers are beginning to build a more accurate picture of the day-to-day quality of teaching.
- Middle leaders know that standards have to improve and some can demonstrate good teaching in their departments, such as modern foreign languages. However, scrutiny of long-term planning shows that teachers do not always get enough guidance or resources to help them to provide effectively; particularly for those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs or disability.
- A robust system for performance management is in place. Some staff were denied pay progression last year because standards were not good enough. The new headteacher has been not yet been able to challenge the performance of senior and middle leaders as robustly. He has, however, given them clear lines of responsibility and told them how their performance will be measured.
- Leaders and managers are using assessment information much more effectively in order to focus their efforts on pupils whose achievement is below that of their peers, namely disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability.
- The curriculum is well-balanced and has been adjusted appropriately to focus on an appropriate range of academic subjects. Adjustments are made for those at risk of permanent exclusion, although these arrangements are very costly, particularly since a number of pupils do not attend the alternative provision regularly.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Members of the governing body have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. They care deeply about the pupils they serve. They welcome the wealth of information they now receive from leaders and managers. They ask pertinent questions and regularly visit school to observe teaching and behaviour.
 - Governors have acted swiftly to deal with the budget deficit. They are now much more confident to challenge senior leaders, as a result of training with the local authority and a much closer working relationship with the headteacher.
 - Governors are under no illusions that standards need to rise swiftly and they are now better placed to support and challenge leaders at all levels.
 - The overwhelming majority of the £340,000 pupil premium funding has been spent on staffing, particularly in mathematics. Governors are acutely aware that there has been little impact on standards.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- Although inspectors observed some high-quality teaching during the inspection, there is a small body of teaching that is poorly prepared, uninspiring and results in pupils misbehaving because they are either frustrated or bored.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not make good progress because they are not always provided with appropriate support for their learning. Too often, pupils who need support to be able to spell correctly or to read well are left to flounder in subjects across the curriculum.

- There are good examples of teachers making good use of information about pupils' abilities and any barriers to learning to prepare lessons appropriately. However, some teachers appear unaware of groups within their classes who may need extra support such as those who are disadvantaged; consequently these pupils do not make good progress.
- In the main, pupils want to learn and succeed. Pupils say that they 'love history' and were observed making rapid progress due to thorough and creative planning by the teacher. Year 8 pupils learned about the Treaty of Versailles and considered how different countries who were affected by the treaty might feel. The teacher skilfully empowered them to gain a deep understanding of the treaty's impact around Europe.
- High expectations characterise some teaching. For instance, in a Year 10 French lesson pupils showed a good understanding of grammar due to the teacher's high expectations and some excellent work using the target language. Feedback to pupils in their books was detailed and there was an exceptionally high standard of response from pupils, leading to improved progress.
- In English, scrutiny of pupils' work highlighted some very helpful and accurate assessment. Spelling errors were clearly identified by the teacher and duly corrected by pupils. A very simple yet effective approach to assessment told pupils what they had done well and how they could improve their work. Books show that pupils learned from their mistakes and went on to make even better progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement. A small minority of pupils, whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively and that they do not always enjoy coming to school.
- There are not enough ways for pupils to report bullying. The behaviour and anti-bullying policy needs to be reviewed so that it is very clear to parents and pupils what they should do if bullying recurs.
- Almost all the staff who responded to the survey feel that pupils are safe in school and that bullying is dealt with effectively. Inspectors found that incidents of bullying are carefully logged and monitored.
- Pupils have high praise for the LINC centre where they go to take part in group work to improve their personal well-being. They appreciate the very caring and nurturing approach taken by the teachers who work with a range of pupils including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- On Saturday mornings, pupils represent the school to compete in a wide range of sporting activities. The school is well known for its sporting prowess and pupils are rightly proud of their success. Pupils enjoy drama with over 70 taking part in a theatrical production of *Oliver*.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- There is a small but significant group of pupils in school who persistently interrupt lessons. There is a feeling that sometimes pupils 'get away with it' because teachers do not reprimand them in the same way. Some teachers send pupils out of the class without warning while others employ a range of strategies including warnings on the board and moving seats.
- Pupils spoken to by inspectors wear their uniforms with pride and the overwhelming majority enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Unfortunately, school is not a positive experience for the few pupils who experience bullying, racist remarks, or who are pushed on the busy corridors. Disadvantaged pupils are much more likely to be excluded from school than their peers.
- The majority of pupils behave well; they are polite, well-mannered and show respect to their teachers and other adults.
- School leaders have already begun working to sharpen up the behaviour management system so that pupils are treated equitably when they misbehave.
- Social times are orderly and supervised by staff but on such a large site it is not easy to identify where the staff are on duty.
- Attendance is improving due to the concerted efforts of staff. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils remains below that of their peers and they account for the majority of persistent absence. Pupils are generally punctual to school and to lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils join the school with a broad range of prior attainment. A significant cohort come into Year 7 with skills and abilities below those typical for their age. In 2015, the proportion of pupils who left the school with five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics was just below the national average.
- Predictions for 2016 show a more favourable picture of achievement, including in mathematics, where standards have been below the national average for some time. The large majority of parents who responded to Parent View feel that their child is making good progress. Pupils were observed by inspectors making good progress across a range of subjects including English, modern foreign languages and history.
- Leaders are tracking achievement more closely and have raised pupils' targets so that they are aspirational. However, information about pupils' current achievement is not collected often enough – leading to missed opportunities for extra support, or for targets to be reviewed.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils remains stubbornly below that of their peers because Year 7 catch-up funding and funding provided to support those eligible for pupil premium is not well-targeted. Much of these funds have been spent on staffing, with limited impact on raising achievement.
- The achievement of the very small number of pupils who are educated off-site is limited by their varied attendance.
- Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training through some strong information, advice and guidance and opportunities for work-related learning.

16 to 19 study programmes

require improvement

- Not enough learners see courses through from AS to A level, which limits their achievement.
- Approximately half of learners opt for some element of vocational learning as part of their study programme and they achieve well. Learners also do well on some A level courses such as English, media and film. There is no significant gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers in the sixth form.
- Almost all pupils who continue to study English GCSE as part of their study programme gain a grade C or above in Year 13. However, pass rates are not as good for pupils who re-sit mathematics GCSE.
- Inspectors' observations of teaching show that lessons are very well planned and engaging. Teachers show strong subject knowledge; a well-structured assessment system and regular testing result in high-quality feedback to learners about how they can do better. Pupils receive lots of individual attention due to the small class sizes. Learners are typically well-behaved in the sixth form and say that they enjoy their learning.
- Learners who have an element of vocational learning as part of their study programme, benefit from one week's work experience. Those who opt for a more academic route benefit from taking part in the national citizenship scheme, voluntary work experience, and mentoring primary school pupils to help them when they move up to secondary school.
- The large majority of learners go on to study at university while others take up jobs or other forms of further training. They appreciate the good-quality careers information, advice and guidance they receive.

School details

Unique reference number	119761
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10000571

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,447
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Judith Catt
Headteacher	Matthew Auger
Telephone number	01524 410207
Website	www.morecambehigh.com
Email address	reception@morecam.be
Date of previous inspection	16 October 2012

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided by the government to support pupils eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A few pupils attend off-site provision at Chadwick High School.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors considered a vast array of evidence including discussions with: pupils, both formally and informally; members of the governing body; senior leaders; middle leaders; representatives of the local authority and welfare staff. They took account of 91 responses to the staff questionnaire and 93 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in lessons and observed behaviour at social times.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wealth of documentation including: assessment information, marking in books, examples of performance management, school improvement plans, self-evaluation information, school policies, short- and long-term lesson planning, attendance and behaviour information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, information on the school's website and records relating to safeguarding. Telephone contact was made with Chadwick High School.

Inspection team

Sally Kenyon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Timothy Gartside	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Dutton	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Hollister	Ofsted Inspector
Debra Wood	Ofsted Inspector
Annette Patterson	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Peckett	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

