

# Manningtree High School

Colchester Road, Lawford, Manningtree, CO11 2BW

## Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, managers and the governing body have successfully improved the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
- The achievement of students has risen particularly well in English, sharply contributing to the good level of achievement across the school.
- Much of the teaching is good. Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop students' knowledge and understanding of what they are studying.
- Students are strong advocates of the school. Students take up many leadership opportunities and make significant contributions within the school. They are very active in raising money for charities.
- Students' behaviour in and around the school is good. They feel safe. Students are very polite and courteous to one another and toward staff and visitors.
- The curriculum is wide in scope in a manner that enriches the lives of the students and strengthens their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of marking and written feedback given to students is inconsistent across the school. Students do not always act on the feedback provided.
- There is not enough outstanding teaching, as some activities do not sufficiently challenge the most-able students.
- The monitoring of teaching does not consistently focus on the achievement of different groups of learners over time.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 37 lessons, observing 35 teachers. Eight lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also conducted a series of further brief observations of students' learning, behaviour and achievement.
- Inspectors looked at students' work and observed the supervision of the students at different points during the school day.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, the senior leadership team and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 232 responses available on the online Parent View questionnaire, and considered the school's own survey of the views of parents and carers. In addition, they took account of the responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of students' progress and a range of students' work. They scrutinised attendance figures, documentation and evidence of safeguarding arrangements, as well as information for parents available on the school website.
- During the inspection, students and staff were participating in 'Charities Week', raising money for a number of different organisations.

## Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Mason

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Easter

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average secondary school.
- Most students are White British.
- One fifth of the students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school for students known to be eligible for free school meals). This proportion is below the national average.
- At just over one tenth, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school uses no alternative provision for its students.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for achievement and progress at the end of Year 11.
- The school is a founder member of the North East Essex Education Partnership (NEEEP) and works closely with other local academies within the partnership. One member of staff supports the coaching of newly appointed middle managers and developing support teams within the partnership.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and students' achievement to outstanding by making sure that:
  - marking and written teacher feedback are of the highest quality throughout the school, and that students act upon the advice in order to accelerate their progress
  - activities are consistently engaging and challenging for the most-able students
  - leaders, including subject leaders, use a wide range of evidence when monitoring teaching and focus clearly on the achievements of different groups of students over time.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Ably assisted by the senior leadership team, the headteacher has provided strong and decisive leadership since the last inspection in tackling previous areas of weakness, particularly the achievement of students in English.
- More robust systems of monitoring and evaluation of how well students achieve have improved students' achievement and the quality of teaching, both of which are now good. Behaviour and safety remain good, and are strongly improving. The school has successfully addressed differences in students' achievements in the past and it fosters good relations.
- Subject and other leaders are effective at leading their departments. Their records show a consistent approach to monitoring across the school. Where achievement is weaker in some subjects – for example, in physical education and drama – the school has made appointments to strengthen the leadership in these areas. Subject and other leaders are focusing on raising the quality of teaching and this is beginning to improve students' achievement.
- The pupil premium is used appropriately on additional staffing, resources and partially funded trips. The work of academic mentors has contributed to the rise in the achievement of disadvantaged students in both English and mathematics.
- Systems of performance management are effective. The information from performance management is used to plan appropriate professional development for staff. A group of dedicated staff is responsible for improving teaching. Through a combination of mentoring and supervision, they have successfully raised the quality of teaching across the school.
- The school generally tackles discrimination by monitoring the performance of different groups of learners at a whole-school level, with suitable arrangements made to improve students' achievements. However, there are some inconsistencies, where more-able pupils are not helped to make consistently good progress.
- While the school converted to academy status prior to the last inspection, it continues to work in partnership with the local authority. The local authority provides good support to the school. This support has built up the capacity of leadership in English, which has resulted in a successful rise in student achievement.
- The school works well in local partnership within a consortium. For example, it is working with other schools to develop new arrangements for assessing students' work following changes to assessment that are being introduced nationally.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. While subject choice is primarily academically focused in Key Stage 4, the school has ensured that a small but suitable range of vocational subjects can be studied on-site. For example, some students study towards a Level 2 qualification in construction, which links to the local further education college. Teaching in lessons is well supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, noticeably in the areas of sport and music.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the Year 7 and Year 8 fortnightly 'curriculum days', where work is organised around a particular theme, and the personal, social, health and educational days that strongly promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious education and assemblies provide a strong contribution to students' preparation for living in modern multi-cultural Britain. The activities week in summer is highly popular with students. The range of trips and activities help to strengthen students' social and cultural development. The information, advice and guidance offered by the school prepare students well for their subject choices at Key Stage 4 and post-16.
- The senior, subject and other leaders frequently monitor teaching and sample students' work. However, some monitoring lacks rigour. This is because it focuses too much on what the teacher does during

lessons, and not sufficiently on what and how the different groups of learners are making progress. Leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching do not always take into consideration the full range of evidence available. Consequently, the school's view of teaching over time is too generous.

### ■ The governance of the school

- The governing body is effective at providing good levels of support and at challenging senior leaders to raise students' achievement, improve the quality of teaching and manage students' behaviour. Governors make regular visits to the school, including targeted 'governors weeks' across the academic year. They also frequently talk to students about their learning.
- Governors are aware of the performance of different groups of students, including disadvantaged students. They understand how well the school performs against other schools, both locally and nationally. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and ensure that the processes for performance management are fully in place. Along with the headteacher, they ensure that recommendations for raises in teachers' pay are not automatic. They are aware of how the school addresses issues related to staff underperformance.
- Governors ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding, including regular effective checking of the single central record. Governors have ensured that the systems and procedures for the school are financially secure.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has taken very successful actions to ensure that the students are proud to be part of the school. One student stated, 'The school cares about you.' Students' conduct around the school is good. Despite the limitations in space at break times and lunchtimes, students behave very well. They wear their uniform proudly and are supportive of each other.
- Since the previous inspection, attendance has risen to above average. The number of students deemed to be persistently absent from school has decreased. The number of students who have been excluded has also fallen significantly.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good in most lessons and occasionally outstanding. Students have good levels of concentration and generally show a desire to learn. Students state that they particularly enjoy learning where it is more practical, or in cases where their learning links to the world of work. In a Year 7 drama lesson, students were studying 'symbolism', for which they used props. The teacher's highly skilful approaches to what the students were learning enabled them to be fully engaged, and highly committed to their learning and contributing to the learning of others.
- The proportion of students taking up responsibilities for making the school an even better community is impressive. Over 140 students have taken a role in this context, either, being a member of the school council, mentoring younger students or supporting learning in different subject areas. During the inspection, all students actively participated in the 'Charities Week' to raise money for their nominated charities. This opportunity galvanised students to develop their social and cultural skills. As a result, last year, students successfully raised £6500 for charities, showing an excellent contribution to the community.
- Very occasionally, in lessons, students become distracted and drift off task.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school takes effective action to make sure that students are safe in and around the school site, as well as on trips, through robust risk assessments. Through the effective teaching of personal, social and health education using themed days throughout the academic year, students are able to show a good awareness of what constitutes safe and unsafe situations.
- The school has taken effective action to tackle discriminatory and derogatory language. For example, some students act as youth health champions and have successfully raised the profile and awareness of challenging stereotypes of sexual identity.

- Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They know about the dangers of social networking. They state that bullying occasionally occurs, but that this is swiftly dealt with. However, some parents who responded to Parent View expressed concerns regarding bullying. The school is actively responding with a range of effective actions, including younger students gaining an online e-safety qualification, to eliminate the dangers of cyber-bullying and to raise awareness of such behaviour.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Teachers create a good atmosphere for learning. The relationships between teachers and students are strong. Generally, teachers have high expectations of their students. Teachers prepare and plan lessons by linking a series of activities that generally provide suitable work. Students commented on the increased amount of homework that is set and how this has aided their learning in class.
- In most lessons, students work well and show good levels of concentration. In a Year 10 art lesson, students worked independently on their own personal projects. They were well focused and enjoyed their learning. The teacher provided a good level of feedback, which aided them in improving their work.
- The school has successfully addressed previous weaknesses in students' achievement in English. This includes strengthening the teaching of reading, promoting literacy across the school and increasing the consistently good quality of English teaching.
- The school is now strengthening its provision for teaching numeracy. Students are benefiting from using visual symbols that represent different numeracy concepts.
- Where teaching is less effective, the work provided to students does not sufficiently motivate or challenge learners to achieve more. On some occasions, the activities do not provide suitable challenge for developing the knowledge, skills and understanding of the most-able students within the class.
- There is good assessment and marking in English and art. However, the quality of written feedback is inconsistent and does not always focus on what the student has learned, nor does it provide feedback regarding what they need to improve upon. Students do not always act upon comments to help them achieve faster progress. The quality of oral feedback is much stronger.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Students join the school with above-average attainment. By the time they leave the school, their attainment has accelerated further. Students make good progress.
- In 2014, there was a considerable increase on the previous year in the proportion of students gaining five good grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics. The proportion of students making expected and exceeding expected progress in English was above the national average. Concerted actions and efforts at improving the quality of teaching in English have also accelerated above-average attainment in reading. In mathematics, the proportion of students making or exceeding expected progress is slightly above the national picture. Students' attainment in mathematics is above average.
- In 2014, boys' attainment increased greatly; the previous gap with girls has closed. Attainment in drama and physical education is weaker compared with English and mathematics. Tracking indicates that students are currently on target for achieving better than in 2014.
- Students who benefit from the Year 7 'catch-up' funding are making good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in relation to their starting points. The support given to these students is good and, as a result, in 2014, the attainment of these students in GCSE rose considerably.
- Disadvantaged students are making particularly good progress in English. In mathematics, students are

generally making good progress. The gap in students' attainment in both English and mathematics, when compared to other students within the school and nationally, is approximately one half of a grade. However, the gap in mathematics between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students is slightly larger. Action taken by the school, including targeted support, has been effective in narrowing this gap. The achievement of disadvantaged students is good in Key Stage 3.

- The most-able students achieve good grades. The proportion of students gaining higher grades at GCSE level has risen; notably in history, English and science. However, this is not consistently the case in all subjects. No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- Progress across the school is good. It is generally stronger in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Some slight variations exist among different groups of learners; nevertheless, the good quality of teaching is having a positive impact on students' achievement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137945
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	452846

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	770
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Emma Finney-Hewitson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Deborah Hollister
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 June 2013
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