

Walton High

Fyfield Barrow, Walnut Tree, Milton Keynes, MK7 7WH

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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 have made at least good progress in a range of subjects by the time they reach the end of Year 11.
- Students supported by the pupil premium achieve well in most years and the gap between their and other students' achievement is closing rapidly. In some subjects and year groups students who are supported by the pupil premium make better progress than other students.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good because teachers and learning mentors make sure that work is well matched to their needs.
- Most teaching is good or even better, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge so they plan interesting lessons which result in students learning well.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and further areas for development. They are effectively ensuring that teaching and achievement continue to improve.
- Behaviour in lessons and at break times is almost always good. Relationships across the school are positive and students are polite and courteous.
- The sixth form is good because, as a result of teaching which is at least good, students learn well, particularly in vocational courses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 3, teaching is not always consistently good or better so that, overall, younger students do not make the same rapid progress as older ones.
- The proportion of students who make and exceed the progress that is expected of them in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11, although good, is not as high as it could be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 43 lessons, two of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. The inspection team also made several short visits to other lessons to check on the progress and behaviour of different groups of students.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students from Key Stages 3 and 4 and the sixth form. Other meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and staff, including those responsible for leading subjects.
- Inspectors analysed 138 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) as well as over 400 responses that the school had to its own parent questionnaire. Inspectors also analysed 122 responses from a staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents including those relating to the monitoring of teaching and the targets set for teachers to improve their work. They also looked at records relating to attendance, behaviour, bullying and safeguarding, the academy's improvement plan and data on students' progress.

Inspection team

Richard Sutton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Gordon Jackson	Additional Inspector
Jane Blakey	Additional Inspector
Gill Bal	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is part of a multi academy trust called the Milton Keynes Education Trust.
- Walton High converted to become an academy school on 1st July 2011. When its predecessor school, also called Walton High, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be outstanding.
- The school is larger than the average secondary school.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- Almost a third of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is a higher than average proportion.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of students receiving support through the pupil premium (additional funding given to schools for looked after students and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- Some students are supported through additional Year 7 catch-up funding, which helps students who join the school with lower than expected levels in reading or mathematics.
- A very small number of students attend off-site, alternative provision at the South Milton Keynes Personal Education Centre.
- The school operates a two year Key Stage 3.
- The executive principal is also the chief executive of a multi academy trust and provides support to other schools within the trust and more widely.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and students' achievement in Key Stage 3 so that it consistently matches the high standards in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - lessons are accurately matched to the skills and abilities of each student so that students make rapid progress
 - teachers consistently use questions at different levels of difficulty so that all students are challenged to think at their own level
 - lessons always proceed at a good pace so that students are able to learn quickly.
- Raise achievement in English and Mathematics to that higher proportions of students make and exceed the progress that is expected of them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- By the end of Year 11, most students typically make very good progress as they achieve, on average, higher grades than would be expected. Over the past three years, the proportion of students who have achieved 5 or more GCSEs grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been consistently above average.
- Year 11 students made good progress in English and mathematics in 2013. The proportion of students who made both the progress that is expected of them and exceeded this expectation was higher than average in both subjects, but not significantly so.
- The majority of students, including those who speak English as an additional language, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. Many students make excellent progress, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up funding to provide, for example, additional learning mentors and specialist teachers. The majority of these students are making good progress in both English and mathematics; this represents good value for money.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding in a variety of ways including financial assistance to enable students to have musical instrument lessons, support with the purchase of school uniform and additional staff who provide academic support to students. In 2013, Year 11 students receiving the pupil premium achieved, on average, almost a grade lower than other students in mathematics and two thirds of a grade lower in English; these gaps are smaller than those seen nationally.
- During the past few years, the school has successfully reduced, and in some cases closed, the gaps in achievement between most students supported by the pupil premium and other students. In some subjects and in some year groups students eligible for additional support achieve better than their peers.
- The small number of students who attend the South Milton Keynes Personal Education Centre make good progress following a range of courses which are well suited to their needs.
- The school does not enter students for examinations early and this ensures that all students are able to study courses for the full amount of time.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. In recent years it has been better in Year 13 than in Year 12 but achievement in Year 12 is improving. Achievement in vocational subjects is particularly strong as a result of consistently good and better teaching. A higher than average proportion of students remain in the sixth form for the full two years.
- The progress that students make accelerates as they move up the school. Students make more progress in Key Stage 4 than they do in Key Stage 3 because they typically benefit from more consistently good or better teaching.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching in the majority of subjects and years is typically good and this why achievement is good. Older students are more likely to benefit from teaching which is more often outstanding than younger students.
- Good or better teaching in the school is typically characterised by teachers using their very good subject knowledge to plan interesting and engaging activities which help students to learn well. Teachers have a good understanding of examination requirements and this enables students to focus on what they need to do to get their highest grade. In a Year 11 art lesson the teacher successfully focused the students on specific vocabulary that they need to use to gain higher marks.
- Teachers use assessment well in lessons in order to support and challenge individual students so that they can achieve their personal best. Lessons are usually well matched to the needs of

students so that work is at the right level for individuals. However, this does not happen as often in Key Stage 3 as it does in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

- Because teachers have good subject knowledge, they are able to ask a wide range of questions skilfully and at different levels of difficulty, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. This allows students to think and develop their understanding at their own level.
- The teaching of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is effective because teachers and learning mentors have a good understanding of students' needs. Consequently they are able to ensure that students have work which is at the right level.
- The majority of students are enthusiastic learners and this has a positive impact on their achievement. However, in some lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, if teachers do not make lessons proceed quickly enough students sometimes become passive which has a negative impact on their achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- As a result of teaching which is good or better, students have good attitudes to learning. The vast majority are keen to succeed and achieve their best.
- The majority of students are polite, courteous and well mannered. The behaviour of the small number of students attending off-site alternative provision is good.
- Students feel safe at school and they have an appropriate understanding of issues relating to a wide range of safety matters, including e-safety.
- Bullying is not common at the school but when it does occur most students feel confident that staff will deal with matters quickly and effectively. Students have a good understanding of the various forms which bullying can take, including cyber bullying, for example.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good. However, a number of staff who responded to the questionnaire, as well as some parents, feel that behaviour is not always good or well managed.
- Students show a good level of respect for each other as well as staff and this supports their good achievement.
- Attendance is well above average and has been for several years. Students understand the importance of good attendance and the school is successfully maintaining these high levels. The vast majority of students arrive to school and lessons on time.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, including governors, have successfully ensured that students make good progress overall, and often excellent progress in Key Stage 4. They have sustained this for the two years since the school converted to become an academy school and this demonstrates that leaders and managers have a strong capacity to further improve achievement.
- Subject leaders are effective in ensuring that teaching and achievement are continuously improving because they are skilled in monitoring the quality of teaching and achievement. They have successful strategies for quickly tackling any underperformance.
- The school is continually monitoring its own performance through an effective approach to self evaluation which involves all leaders and managers. This strategy enables the school to identify the most important areas for improvement and accurately prioritise them in the school development plan.
- Where standards of achievement or the quality of teaching are judged to be below the high levels expected, leaders ensure that appropriate support is rapidly put in place. However, although good, teaching and achievement in Key Stage 3 is not as strong as it is in later years; this has not been fully identified by leaders.

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- Leaders support the development of teaching well. For example, all teachers are given time each week to develop their teaching through strategically planned training and development. Staff appreciate and value these opportunities.
 - The targets set for teachers to support them in improving their work are linked to students' achievement. The proportion of staff who have moved up the relevant pay scales in the past two years is appropriately linked to their performance.
 - Leaders achieve good value for money with respect to additional financial resources such as the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding. They ensure that eligible students receive a good level of support which results in good achievement.
 - The curriculum meets the needs of students very well. There is a wide and diverse range of subjects on offer and these are further extended to meet the specific interests of students through the 'short courses'. A variety of clubs provide further opportunities for students to explore their interests and to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and understanding well.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - members of the governing body have good skills, including the ability to interpret student achievement data accurately. They are fully committed to supporting ongoing improvements in teaching and achievement as well as influencing educational standards beyond the school through the Milton Keynes Education Trust. The school also benefits from its links with the Trust.
 - governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance and hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and students' achievement well. The governors have a good understanding of how targets are set for teachers and how these relate to staff pay rises and promotion. They have good procedures in place to monitor this process robustly.
 - the governing body manages the additional pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding well and monitors the impact that this funding has on eligible students.
 - governors have not monitored teaching and achievement in Key Stage 3 as rigorously as they have in all other year groups.
 - the governing body makes sure that the academy fulfils its responsibilities regarding safeguarding. All staff have been checked as required, and are trained appropriately to keep students safe and free from harm.
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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	136842
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	413355

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1507
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marilyn Moffat
Principal	Ms Michelle Currie
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01908 677954
Fax number	01908 677191
Email address	enquiries@waltonhigh.org.uk

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