

Flixton Girls' School

Flixton Road, Flixton, Manchester, M41 5DR

Inspection dates 4–5 March 2014

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		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress and achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. Results achieved by Year 11 students are rising rapidly, and are now well above average.
- Most teaching is at least good, and an increasing amount is outstanding.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and across the school is good. Relationships between students and teachers are respectful, and students are fiercely proud of their school.
- Students' safety is outstanding. The excellent care that students receive keeps them safe.
- The school uses its founding principles of 'aspiration, empowerment, excellence' to promote students' personal development very effectively. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The school's leadership is outstanding. The committed and passionate headteacher has a very clear idea of how to improve the school, and she expects a lot from both staff and students. She is very well supported by her senior team and other leaders.
- The performance of teachers is managed well. The clear, successful focus on improving teaching and learning means that standards continue to rise.
- School leaders regularly check the progress made by all students. If any fall behind, effective extra help is given quickly.
- The school's sports specialism is used well to inspire students to reach their full potential.
- Governors are very effective at both supporting and challenging school leaders to improve the school further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, in some subjects, students have made less rapid progress than in English and mathematics.
- Some teachers mark students' work less effectively than others.
- The most able students are not always given work to do which is hard enough.
- Sometimes disabled students and those who have special educational needs do not have enough chances to improve their basic literacy skills in all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 37 part-lessons, of which five were joint observations with school leaders. They also looked at students' work and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with four groups of students, with staff, school leaders and governors. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone to the School's Improvement Partner.
- Inspectors took into account 84 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), and considered 57 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at documents including the school's plans for improvement, records of the quality of teaching, school information on the progress of students and at nationally published results. They also looked at records of students' behaviour and attendance, and how the school keeps students safe.
- During the inspection most students in Year 8, and some staff, were out of school on a residential visit.

Inspection team

Michael Phipps, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Kathleen Harris	Additional Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Additional Inspector
Pauline Pitman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is slightly lower than average. The pupil premium is the extra funding provided for children in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from armed services families.
- The very large majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is slightly higher than average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- Flixton Girls' School converted to become an academy school on 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, Flixton Girls' High School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- A small number of students have access to alternative provision or work-related courses at the Canterbury Centre, Trafford Medical Needs Centre, the Community Change Foundation and Rathbone's voluntary youth sector organisation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school has Specialist Sports College status, and is a Youth Sport Trust Gold Partner school.
- The school is a Leading Edge partner school.
- The school works in partnership with Trafford College, which since September 2013 has provided post-16 education for a small number of the school's students on the school site. As this provision is delivered and managed by Trafford College, it is separately inspected, so it was not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, to enable students to make rapid progress in all subjects, by making sure that:
 - teachers' marking in all subjects tells students the next steps they should take to improve their work, and students have the chance to act on this advice
 - the school's most able students are given harder work to do so they make faster progress
 - disabled students and those who have special educational needs are consistently supported to make more rapid progress, by reinforcing their basic literacy skills in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students' standards on entry to the school are broadly average. By the time they leave school in Year 11, the proportion achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics is well above average. Standards have risen sharply in the last three years.
- Students make excellent progress in English. The proportion making and exceeding expected progress in English is rising, and is well above national figures.
- Students' progress in mathematics is excellent. A very high proportion make expected or better progress in the subject. Students' results are well-above national figures.
- The school's policy of entering students early for GCSE examination in mathematics works well. A high proportion of students gained the highest grades in mathematics in 2013.
- Students supported by the pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make the same good progress as other students. Gaps in achievement are closing rapidly. In 2013, this group of students achieved English results in line with other students in the school. In mathematics, they were less than half a GCSE grade behind, which is smaller than the gap nationally.
- The school's Specialist Sports College status supports good student achievement in academic and work-related sports courses in Key Stage 4.
- The small number of students who are taught off the school site achieve well. This is because their courses are well matched to their needs, and the school carefully checks their attendance and achievement.
- The school spends the extra funding effectively to provide help for students who join the school in Year 7 with lower levels of literacy and numeracy. As a result, most of these students catch up well.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall, but some, particularly those supported at school action plus, make slower progress. This is because in some subjects they do not consistently get the chance to improve their basic literacy skills.
- Although students' achievement over time is improving in all subjects, they currently make slower progress in science, modern foreign languages and humanities subjects than in English and mathematics.
- School information and inspection evidence show that although good overall, students' rates of progress vary across year groups.
- The school's most able students make progress in most subjects, which is in line with other students. However, in some subjects, including in science, modern foreign languages, history and geography, over time too few have achieved the highest GCSE grades. This situation is now improving.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching is at least good, and an increasing amount is outstanding. Relationships between students and teachers are warm and respectful. In an English lesson seen by inspectors, for example, the teacher skilfully created an atmosphere in which students in Year 11 felt comfortable to share their personal views and experiences in preparation for a piece of writing.
- Teachers set students challenging tasks. In a physical education lesson, for instance, inspectors saw innovative use of learning technologies: students in Year 7 gave verbal feedback to each other on their performance in gymnastics, supported by filming each other on an iPad. This motivated students very well, and produced some outstanding learning.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject. For example, in a sociology lesson on policing and ethnicity, students in Key Stage 4 were inspired by the teacher's skilled use of resources to

bring the topic to life. As a result, students made outstanding progress.

- Teachers use questioning well to check students' progress in lessons, and they use this information to adapt their teaching.
- The effectiveness of teachers' marking is not consistent across the school. Some teachers give very precise guidance on the next steps for students to improve their work. Other teachers do this less effectively. Sometimes students have the chance to think about and take action on this guidance by using, for example, the 'purple pen of progress', but this is not always evident.
- In some subjects, teachers have not set difficult enough work for the most able students. As a consequence, they have not been required to think hard or sufficiently for themselves. While this still occasionally occurs, this group of students makes less than good progress. However, there is clear evidence that these students are increasingly challenged in those subjects in which their achievement has previously been relatively weaker.
- Sometimes disabled students and those who have special educational needs are not fully supported in lessons. Those who need help are not consistently given the chance to improve their basic skills in literacy by, for example, learning common spellings or key words.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. They behave well in class and around the school. They are polite, friendly and respectful towards adults and each other. They wear their uniform with pride.
- Students are fiercely proud of their school. They appreciate the improvements made in recent years. They understand the importance of good behaviour and positive attitudes.
- Attitudes to learning are good and students work hard. They come well prepared for lessons, enjoy taking part, and offer their opinions willingly. Disruption to lessons caused by poor behaviour is rare.
- Students have many opportunities to take on leadership roles in school, such as prefects, house captains, sports captains, librarians and membership of the school council. This helps develop their self-confidence.
- The school's work to keep students' safe and secure is outstanding. The school is vigilant in combating many potential dangers including those caused by unsafe use of the internet. Students are taught very effectively how to stay safe, and develop the skills and self-esteem to make safe choices.
- Parents are confident that the school provides a safe environment for their children.
- Students have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They told inspectors that bullying is rare. School records confirm this. Students are sure that if they told an adult, any bullying would stop.
- Racist incidents are very rare.
- Attendance is rising, and is now above the national average.
- The numbers of student exclusions are falling, and are now at national average levels.
- Students' behaviour is not outstanding because in a small number of lessons, especially those taught by supply teachers, students lose focus and become distracted. This slows their progress.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The school is very strongly led by a committed and passionate headteacher. She has a very clear plan for improving the school, and is uncompromising in her expectations. She provides an inspirational role model for students. One commented, 'She is an amazing woman!' The headteacher, with the effective support of other leaders, is highly effective in driving the school forward and raising standards.
- Systems for managing the performance of teachers are robust and linked to salary progression. Judgements on teachers' performance are based on students' progress. Any underperformance

is tackled rigorously. This clear focus means that standards of teaching continue to rise.

- School leaders regularly check the progress made by all students. Teachers are held to account for the progress of the students they teach. If any students fall behind, effective extra help is given quickly.
- Teachers in charge of subjects make regular checks on the quality of teaching in their departments. They make a valuable contribution to the school's rapidly improving standards across all subjects.
- Subjects and courses are well matched to students' interests and abilities. There is an appropriate balance of academic and work-related courses in Key Stage 4. The sixth form courses taught in school by Trafford College are well suited to a group of students whose needs were not being met by existing post-16 provision.
- The school's sports specialism is used well to involve and inspire students to reach their full potential both personally and academically. Students have many chances to participate in competitions and to take on sports leadership opportunities, and they do particularly well in the BTEC sport course in Key Stage 4.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's founding principles of 'aspiration, empowerment, excellence' are at the heart of a highly effective approach to students' personal development. An extensive programme of after-school clubs and activities, together with Outward Bound residential courses, helps to promote students' self-esteem and confidence. Excellent thought-provoking displays around the school highlight high-achieving female role models. Form time is used very effectively to further develop these themes.
- The school provides students with appropriate high-quality independent advice and guidance to help them decide their next steps in education, training or employment.
- School leaders use the additional funding from the pupil premium well. Extra funds are spent on in-class support, mentoring, a reading programme and on subsidising places on school visits. This has successfully closed the gap between the achievement of supported students and others in school. The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination so that all students reach their potential.
- The school receives well-targeted and effective support from its external Improvement Partner.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance of the school is very effective. Governors are ambitious to improve the school. They have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching, and many governors are regular visitors to the school to see teaching at first hand. They understand how teachers' performance is managed, and how any underperformance is tackled. They understand what the school needs to do to improve further, and contribute well to plans for improvement. They know what students' performance data tells them about how well the school is doing compared to schools nationally. This means they can hold school leaders to account, and both support and challenge them to improve the school further. Governors oversee the school's budget well, and are well informed about how extra funding, such as the pupil premium, is spent, and with what impact. They are keen to improve their skills, and many undertake training to carry out their roles more effectively. Governors have the capacity to help move the school forward in its ambitious plans to improve further.

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	136965
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	440909

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	772
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	James Robinson
Headteacher	Julie Hazeldine
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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