

# Rainhill High School Media Arts College

Warrington Road, Rainhill, Merseyside, L35 6NY

**Inspection dates** 25–26 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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
Sixth form provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- School leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school's strengths. They have created a culture of high expectations and ambition for the school, which is inclusive of all students.
- Students achieve well overall. GCSE results are consistently above national averages across the range of subjects, including mathematics and English.
- The majority of teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching leading to students making good and outstanding progress in the majority of lessons.
- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Their attendance levels are above national averages; they are punctual and arrive to lessons well equipped to begin learning.
- The school offers many opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; for example, through the many subject-related overseas trips and in the visual and performing arts.
- The sixth form is good. The wide and diverse curriculum meets students' needs and aspirations, and high-quality careers guidance and support prepare them well for the next steps in their education, training or employment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students in the school and in the sixth form are not yet making outstanding progress over time. This is because there is not sufficient outstanding teaching and a minority of teaching requires improvement.
- The quality of marking and feedback is variable across the school and does not always help students to improve.
- Teachers do not always provide work that is sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able students.
- Teaching about the potential risks to students' safety, health and well-being is not always sufficiently robust or appropriate to their needs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a wide range of classes and conducted some joint observations of lessons with a member of the school's senior team.
- Inspectors held formal meetings with approximately 50 students from all year groups.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a local authority representative, senior and middle leaders, teachers, and other school staff. Informal discussions also took place with staff and students.
- Inspectors took account of the 81 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 75 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation and action planning, safeguarding and child-protection records, and data relating to students' achievement.

## Inspection team

Janet Palmer, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Brian Padgett	Her Majesty's Inspector
John Leigh	Additional Inspector
Catherine Davies	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Rainhill High School and Media Arts College is larger than most secondary schools.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported by pupil premium funding is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Twelve students attend off-site alternative provision on a part-time or full-time basis. This is provided by St Helen's College, Instant Training, Napier Street Inclusion, St Helen's PACE, and Aspire.
- The school hosts the Liverpool Football Club (LFC) Academy Centre. Eighty-one students on the school roll are registered with the LFC Academy Centre and additional support and lessons are provided in the LFC Education Centre at the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations of students' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of students making good or better progress in lessons, particularly the most able, by ensuring that questioning engages students, challenges their thinking and deepens learning.
- Enhance the efficacy of whole-school and departmental planning by ensuring documentation is clear, cogent and concise.
- Ensure that the curriculum is used effectively to help students further safeguard themselves, with particular regard to e-safety.
- Improve success rates in the sixth form by ensuring students cope effectively with the transition from linear to modular approaches in A level courses.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have a strong vision for the future of the school that is inclusive and aspirational. They set challenging targets that staff strive to meet.
- Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their role. They use assessment data to good effect to identify students who require extra help and support their teams to provide this.
- A rigorous approach is being taken to the management of staff performance. Evaluations of the quality of teaching are used to provide appropriate support and professional development, and the links between teachers' performance and salary progression have been strengthened.
- Action planning at whole-school and departmental level is matched well to the school's priorities, with a strong focus on improving outcomes for students. However, it requires simplification, with clear and measurable success criteria to make it more accessible and potentially effective.
- Pupil premium funding is used creatively and effectively; for example, through academic support, but also to ensure that disadvantaged students are able to attend school trips and have laptops with Wi-Fi connection at home. Disadvantaged students at the school perform better than similar students nationally but less well than their peers in school, although the achievement gap is narrowing.
- Equalities are addressed well through a curriculum that emphasises relevance and appropriateness for students with different abilities. Respect for difference is promoted through activities such as the Sophie Lancaster day and links to the Anthony Walker Foundation. However, many of the students spoken to reported that homophobic language is common and not always censured when overheard by teachers.
- The curriculum provides some outstanding opportunities for students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. For example, students who select one or more of the many arts options gain access to the Arts Academy, which offers opportunities such as master classes and visits to the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts, and access to the recording studio and radio room. Trips and activities range from visiting the battlefields of the Somme, to joining an expedition to Tanzania, and animation workshops at the National Media Museum.
- Safeguarding, particularly of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged students is strong. All statutory requirements are met. Students who attend off-site provision are well safeguarded through detailed recording, tracking and spot-checks of their attendance and progress. However, the school could do more to help students safeguard themselves by having a higher safeguarding profile in the curriculum, including the risks of on-line 'grooming' and recruitment to self-harm and extremist web-sites.
- The school works effectively with external partners, including the local authority, to enhance students' educational opportunities. As an education provider for Liverpool Football Club it has been able to invest in the physical environment, gain access to professional football coaching and enabled students to mix with young people from a range of different backgrounds.
- Careers information, advice and guidance are very strong. Students in Year 11 work closely with their tutors and parents to ensure that their post-16 option choices meet their interests, needs and career aspirations. Students in the sixth form value the many opportunities they have to hone their employability skills, including an entitlement to work experience. As a result, the proportion of students who move on to employment, education or training is very high.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share the headteacher's inclusive vision for the school. They have contributed to the school's self-evaluation and have a good understanding of the school's finances, including the appropriate allocation of pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding. They understand and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to keeping students safe, have a sound knowledge about the quality of teaching, and monitor closely its links with salary progression. Governors take part in regular training, including for safeguarding, and data analysis to enable them to challenge the school to account for its effectiveness.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. Students demonstrate good attitudes to school. They are punctual to lessons, engage with tasks, take pride in their work and appearance, and work well together. Very few lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour and students conduct themselves well between lessons and during break times.

- Attendance is above the national average and improving, whilst exclusions are well below the national average. This is because the school makes extensive efforts to support and meet the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged students. The attendance of students who are looked after is the highest of all groups in the school.
- The students who met with inspectors said that bullying was rare and when bullying is reported to an adult, offenders are punished and the bullying is likely to stop. However, there was some name-calling, particularly about appearance, that was not always reported to an adult. And although racist language, attitudes or behaviour are not tolerated by staff or students, homophobic language is not routinely challenged by either students or adults in the school.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- The staff know their students very well and an overwhelming proportion of parents who completed the on-line survey agreed that the school keeps their child safe. Similarly, the students spoken to also felt safe in school.
- School records indicate that students who attend off-site provision attend well and are well safeguarded.
- Although the curriculum addresses personal safety issues such as sexual health, and the dangers of substance misuse, the school needs to ensure that the curriculum is used effectively to help students safeguard themselves, with particular regard to e-safety concerns such as sexual grooming, and sites that promote self-harm or extremism.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good over time. This is evident in the students' good achievement, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, and those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, both in lessons and in their books.
- Relationships between teachers and students are based on high levels of respect thus enabling a good climate for learning to take place.
- The strongest teachers stretch their students by having very high expectations of what they can achieve, and by setting them demanding and thought-provoking tasks, matched to their level of ability. These teachers often use questioning very effectively to assess understanding but also to challenge students to think more deeply and respond more thoughtfully. However, this was not routinely the case. Too often teachers moved on to the next task, missing opportunities to develop students' thinking, particularly for the most able.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use a range of resources including interactive whiteboards to good effect.
- Marking and feedback is increasingly effective with many teachers offering helpful advice. However, school guidance on marking is not always being adhered to and some students are not improving as a result of the feedback they receive.
- Some attention is paid to literacy in the classroom and in the marking of students' work, and students are encouraged to develop their communication skills, particularly through the performing arts. However, too few students are routinely expected to use subject-specific terminology in lessons and very few of those who met with inspectors said that they read either widely or often.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because all groups of students make good progress from their starting points. By Year 11, they are reaching standards that are consistently higher than the national average. This evidence of good achievement was confirmed by the good progress students were seen to make in the majority of lessons.
- Underachievement in English in recent years has been rectified and students are now making progress in-line with expectations.
- National figures over time show that disadvantaged students at Rainhill High School and Media Arts College achieve better results than similar students nationally. However, they achieve less well than other students in the school. Figures for 2013 show that the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged students and their peers was the equivalent to one and a half grades at GCSE in both mathematics and English. Comparative national data for 2014 is not yet available. However, current school data shows that,

although the attainment gap remains, it is decreasing in most subjects, including English and mathematics.

- Students who enter the school with high levels of attainment are making progress that is in-line with expectations.
- An appropriate curriculum and very effective support systems for students who are disabled or have special educational needs is ensuring that they make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The school's policy for early entry for GCSE examinations is used thoughtfully and effectively to ensure that the most vulnerable students have the opportunity to secure GCSE grades at an earlier opportunity; very able students can progress at a rate suited to their abilities thus extending their educational options; and LFC Academy students can complete formal examinations alongside their club commitments. There is no evidence that this policy is limiting the potential for students to achieve higher grades, including the most able.
- The funding for students eligible for the Year 7 catch up premium<sup>1</sup> is having a positive impact on progress in English and mathematics. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, shows that students make rapid progress in their literacy and numeracy skills as a result.
- Students attending off-site provision are well supported and achieve well.

### **The sixth form provision** is good

- Students enter the sixth form with results that are generally below the national average, particularly for the attainment of higher grades. Over time, students taking A level courses attain in-line with national averages which amounts to them having made good progress overall. Students on vocational courses, who also enter the sixth form with lower than average attainment, achieve better than average results which indicates that they are making outstanding progress.
- In 2014 the A2 results dropped to below expectations. This was because students were not well enough prepared for the changes in the way that A level courses were being delivered nationally. The school has plans in place to address this.
- Results at AS level improved in 2014, remaining consistently above national rates for A\* to C grades and improving to be in-line with national rates for A\* to B grades.
- Almost all of the sixth form teaching observed during the inspection was good or outstanding. Teachers had very high expectations of students' work and were able to draw on their own good subject knowledge to enliven lessons.
- Students' experience of the sixth form is enriched by a good range of subject-related visits and visitors and through the tutorial programme. However, not all take full advantage of the extra-curricular options thus limiting opportunities to develop their personal, social and employability skills.
- Leadership of the sixth form is strong. Plans are constantly reviewed and revised to ensure improved overall outcomes for students, and good practice is being shared through the development of teaching and learning groups.
- Retention rates are good and students appreciate the wide and varied curriculum offer, which includes 25 A level and 11 vocational options.
- In 2014 the school achieved the Quality Award for Careers Education. The high quality of careers advice, information and guidance is evident in the fact that most students progress onto their destinations of choice.

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<sup>1</sup> The Year 7 catch-up premium is for students who did not achieve the expected level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2.

## 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>	104830
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	448280

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,546
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steve Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Pout
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 677205
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