

Todmorden High School

Ewood Lane, Todmorden, West Yorkshire, OL14 7DG

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and governors, exude high expectations on the part of all students in this rapidly improving school. They have responded well to the outcomes of the previous inspection, and created a climate in which learning is valued and enjoyed.
- The vast majority of students make good progress across Years 7 to 11, especially in English and mathematics, reaching securely above-average standards by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Teaching is good overall. Students are positive about the many interesting and thought-provoking activities and visits.
- Students with disabilities, or who have special educational needs, achieve well. This is because adults are acutely aware of their needs and provide well-tailored support.
- Pupil premium funding is used very successfully to promote the achievement of disadvantaged students.
- The most able students are challenged appropriately, and the proportion attaining the highest GCSE grades is rising.
- Students enjoy coming to school and behave well. They take pride in the roles and responsibilities that are accorded to them, and ensure that their peers are fully supported, and included, in all of the daily experiences.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It is enhanced by the very strong relationships in school, and through the many enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities that help build students' self-esteem.
- Students are exceptionally well cared for and feel very safe at all times.
- Parents and staff are very positive about the school's work. In particular, parents believe that their children are happy and learn well.
- The numbers of students continuing into the sixth form are rising, and overall achievement is good. It is particularly strong in vocational courses.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher. He has managed a large number of changes to staffing well and is determined to raise achievement even higher.
- Governors check systematically how well the school is doing, through the detailed information that they receive.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of students in the sixth form do not make the progress they should, in a minority of academic subjects, by the end of Year 13.
- A small minority of sixth-form students leave the sixth form without a good GCSE grade in English and/or mathematics.
- Teaching does not always develop sufficiently students' writing skills.
- A minority of teaching does not insist fully that students respond to the feedback they receive to improve further their work and achieve even better outcomes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 different lessons, of which three were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors visited three tutor group sessions and one assembly during the school day.
- Students' work was sampled informally in lessons in a wide range of subjects.
- Inspectors also reviewed a range of documents, including the school's own data on current students' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governing body meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with students across Years 7 to 13, governors and school staff, including those with management responsibilities. Separate discussions also took place with representatives from the local authority and from the Gorse Academies Trust.
- Inspectors evaluated 119 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as responses from parents, students and staff to the school's own questionnaires. Inspectors also took account of the views of 49 members of the school's staff through the inspection questionnaires they returned.

Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colin Mason	Additional Inspector
Michele Costello	Additional Inspector
Patrick Hargreaves	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, and therefore eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is slightly above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students with disabilities or who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- A small minority of Year 12 students are educated off site, for part of the school week, at The Maltings College, Halifax. They follow vocational courses such as child care, horticulture, light vehicle maintenance and catering.
- The school receives support from the local authority, The Gorse Academies Trust, and a National Leader in Education.
- Since the previous inspection the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher have been made permanent. There have been changes in the senior and middle leadership teams. An external review of governance has taken place, resulting in substantial changes to the way the governing body operates.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching is never less than consistently good and more is outstanding, including in the sixth form, by:
 - insisting all students respond to teachers' comments about how to improve further their work
 - sharpening students' writing skills, especially their accuracy in spelling, use of a wider range of specialist language and punctuation for effect, and sequencing of ideas in more complex sentences and better thought out paragraphs.
- Enhance the achievement of a minority of Year 13 students, in a minority of A-level subjects, by:
 - ensuring all A-level teachers have high expectations of what all students can achieve in all subjects
 - using students' progress information to meet precisely their needs in all lessons
 - ensuring those students who enter the sixth form without a good GCSE qualification in English and/or mathematics, quickly attain at least a 'C' grade.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher exudes high expectations and is aspirational on the part of all students. He has ensured a concerted response to the previous inspection's findings and has tackled robustly, and successfully, all areas for improvement. His determination to raise achievement even higher inspires leaders and managers at all levels.
- Senior leaders share his ambition for further improvement. They have refined procedures for gathering information about students' progress and ensure that these are used increasingly effectively by most teachers to check regularly students' rates of progress, and tackle any underachievement early. As a result, the performance of the most able students and those with disabilities or special educational needs, in particular, has risen. Leaders are equally rigorous in checking the progress, attendance and behaviour of the small group of students who attend off-site learning.
- The roles and expectations of middle leaders have been transformed since the previous inspection. Bespoke training has heightened their confidence in assessing regularly the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning and progress over time. They are now at the centre of sharing best practice and identifying and improving aspects of teaching that still require attention.
- Well-tailored professional development provided by colleagues within school, commissioned from The Gorse Academies Trust and from a National Leader in Education, as well as appropriately targeted support from the local education authority, has enhanced the quality of teaching. Rigorous appraisal procedures ensure that the precise training needs of all teachers are continuously met.
- The headteacher has the right systems in place to make decisions about teachers' movement up the salary scale, when required, on the basis of reliable information about the impact of their teaching on students' learning over time.
- The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Leaders and managers produce detailed plans to improve further the school's work. For example, they have identified the work still to be done to enhance further students' key literacy skills in Years 7 to 11, and raise the A-level achievement of a minority of Year 13 students in a minority of subjects.
- Teachers know their students well. As a result the school makes sure that all have an equal opportunity to achieve success. Margins in the performance between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students have notably closed since the previous inspection. This continues to be the case in school. This is evidence of highly effective use of pupil premium funding.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet students' needs. Small group work, one-to-one support, judicious off-site learning opportunities, a broad range of subjects and very strong personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons, prepare students well for life in modern Britain. They promote the importance of freedom for all individuals and the significance of mutual respect, particularly for those from different faiths and cultures.
- Careers education and advice are influential in ensuring that a high proportion of students continue in education, employment or training when they leave school at the end of Year 11, and when they leave the sixth form.
- Students have access to a wide array of sporting, musical and performance events and extra-curricular activities. Inter-form competitions, school council business, attendance at the Russian Club, self-defence classes and forensic science workshops, visits abroad and to the local Magistrates Court, as well as an enactment of the Battle of Hastings; all enrich well students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They help to promote their understanding of the importance of equality of opportunity. In providing these experiences, the school emphasises the importance of good relations and ensures any discrimination that may arise is tackled decisively.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. The vast majority believe that their views are listened to and taken into account. They consider that their children are happy and make good progress. Most would recommend the school to other families.
- The local authority knows the school well. It has brokered high-quality support from a National Leader in Education and helps to validate the reliability and accuracy of the school's assessment processes.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have responded positively to the external review of governance carried out after the previous inspection. They show determination to carry out their responsibilities more rigorously than before.

- The reviewed committee structure, reduced size of the governing body and regular information from the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders, ensure governors understand and manage the school's performance better.
- Minutes of committees indicate that governors are confident in challenging the headteacher about key aspects of the school's work, especially through the detailed information they receive about safeguarding, students' progress, attendance and behaviour and the quality of teaching.
- Governors now have detailed discussions about major spending decisions, in particular the allocation of pupil premium and Year 7 'catch-up' funding. For example, governors have authorised additional staffing to support students' literacy and numeracy skills development in small groups, and have appointed mentors, coaches and counsellors to enhance their self-esteem and well-being. They are increasingly aware of the impact that these measures have.
- Governors are rigorous in annually reviewing the performance of the headteacher and receiving information about the performance targets set for teachers and potential links with salary progression. They ensure that teachers only receive financial reward if their students reach their progress and attainment targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good. The vast majority enjoy positive relationships with one another and with the many adults who support their work and personal development.
- At breaks and lunchtimes, in the dining room and when moving between lessons in the narrow corridors and tight stair-wells, students conduct themselves in a mature manner. They are exceptionally welcoming of visitors and eager to fulfil their special roles as prefects and mentors to maintain a calm and orderly atmosphere.
- Key leaders check rigorously the behaviour of the small minority of Year 12 students following courses away from the school's site. The school's information shows that the behaviour of these students is exemplary.
- The school's information indicates that bullying and racist incidents are rare over time. Students say that any misdemeanours are addressed swiftly by staff. As a result the school's environment is clean, litter and graffiti free, and accommodation and specialist equipment well respected.
- Since the previous inspection attendance has risen and is now just above average.
- In a minority of lessons, and particularly where teaching does not stimulate and challenge sufficiently all students, the school's records show that a small minority do not persevere fully with their work. They do not always respond fully to teachers' written feedback in their books and totally stretch themselves.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is outstanding.
- Students are very aware about how to keep themselves and others safe, at all times. They are exceptionally confident in the use of the internet and highly conscious of potential risks posed by emails from unknown sources, by conversations using social media and by surfing of extreme websites.
- Adults are very well trained in child protection and safeguarding matters.
- Students say that they are extremely well looked after. They emphasise that the school's climate is one of openness in which their views are encouraged and listened to carefully by all staff and their peers.
- Students relate very well indeed to each other and take steps to ensure that peers are always included in friendship groups and in planned activities both on and off the school's site.
- Governors visit the school frequently to carry out thorough checks of safety and act upon their findings. They are particularly well informed about the stringent checks carried out by the school's leaders to ensure that Year 12 students following courses away from the school's site are well cared for and feel safe and assured in their learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly since the previous inspection. Staff readily share ideas about their teaching with other staff in school and within The Gorse Academies Trust. As a result achievement has risen and

students now learn well in most lessons.

- The vast majority of teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve and plan motivating and thought-provoking experiences to encourage a curiosity for learning. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson, students were engrossed in a DVD clip that showed the effects of shell shock on First World War soldiers, as they returned to the Home Front. They quickly grasped the causes and symptoms of shell shock, emotionally affected by the moving images. Similarly, in a Year 10 science lesson, students were fascinated by their work on classifying rocks, and fully engaged in emerging discussions about the social and moral issues surrounding fossil fuels.
- Relationships in the vast majority of lessons are highly supportive. Most teachers encourage students to think increasingly for themselves. They provide scenarios and real-life contexts for learning, so that students can apply their developing skills and deepen their understanding.
- Since the previous inspection, staff have received much training on the use of students' progress information to help plan lessons, so that they meet individuals' needs more carefully. This work is paying off. A high proportion of learning experiences and activities now challenge suitably students of all abilities, especially the most able, and those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- In a high proportion of lessons, teachers check carefully whether all students understand sufficiently what they are learning. They are increasingly vigilant about whether students have absorbed all key information, and practised sufficiently, before moving them on. As a result the most able learners, as well as disadvantaged students and those with disabilities or special educational needs, achieve equally well.
- Expectations of the quality and amount of work to be completed have also improved. Increasing opportunities are provided for students to respond to marking that invites them to enhance their written work. Not all teachers yet insist that students take full advantage of these opportunities and fully stretch themselves.
- The teaching of reading skills across all subjects is good. The vast majority of students read fluently, showing well-developed inference skills to 'read between the lines' and deduce hidden messages.
- The teaching of mathematical skills is equally strong. Students measure and mark out with precision in resistant materials, calculate and apply accurately different formulae in science and interpret a range of charts and graphs confidently in geography, business and information and communication technology lessons.
- Not all teachers apply consistently, in all subjects, the school's policy on the promotion of key writing skills. For example, in a minority of lessons students' spelling mistakes of key subject vocabulary are not corrected, their use of a wider range of language not promoted sufficiently and guidance about punctuating complex sentences, for greater clarity and effect, overlooked. A minority of teachers do not provide enough guidance in helping some students to develop more adventurous writing styles and to set out their ideas in a more structured manner, using paragraphs to better effect.

The achievement of pupils **is good**

- Most students start Year 7 with broadly average standards. The vast majority make good rates of progress so that the current numbers attaining five or more good GCSE grades are rising, and above average. This represents significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school's information and work in students' books indicate that this wave of improvement is sustained throughout the school.
- The proportions of students making expected and more-than-expected progress in English and mathematics, are now above national expectations and rising strongly. In particular, boys' achievement is strong. They are motivated by thoughtful choice of topics by their teachers.
- Students' reading and communication skills are honed well in many subjects. For example, in history and geography students of all aptitudes confidently scan written materials, from a range of sources, to find specific information and deepen their understanding. They read fluently, and with meaning, extracts from poems and plays, in English. A high proportion of students readily volunteer ideas in many lessons, expressing their thoughts succinctly and readily justifying their opinions. They listen attentively, and with interest, to peers' explanations, and are often willing to challenge emerging viewpoints in a rational and sensible way.
- Students' mathematical skills are equally well developed. Students show confidence in many lessons. They calculate mentally, use decimals and fractions accurately and successfully solve algebraic equations. Increasingly, they apply their mathematical knowledge to tackle a range of problems, including unfamiliar mathematical questions, and fully explain their mathematical reasoning.
- Many students write fluently, and convey ideas and opinions in a clear and compelling style. A minority are

not as accurate as they might be in the spelling of common and familiar words and phrases and do not use enough subject specific language to good effect. In a minority of lessons, students' sequencing and interpretation of information are unclear. This is because they have not yet fully developed the skills of using a range of punctuation, and paragraphs, to order their thoughts in a systematic and methodical fashion.

- Students make good progress and achieve well in many subjects, notably English, mathematics, art, business and resistant materials. Achievement is improving rapidly in history, French and science, where it has historically lagged behind.
- Students with disabilities or who have special educational needs achieve well. They are well supported by the planned activities in lessons, and in small groups out of lessons by practitioners who understand precisely their specific skills that require further development.
- The most able students also achieve well. An increasing number are stretched appropriately in lessons and reach their challenging GCSE targets. As a consequence, the proportion of students attaining A* to A grades is rising.
- The small minority of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, including the very few who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. Teachers and other adults support effectively their knowledge and understanding of the English language and tailor work well to meet their specific needs.
- Achievement margins between disadvantaged students and non-disadvantaged students, in English and mathematics, are closing rapidly, both in school and when compared with national outcomes. In 2014, the margin between the proportion of disadvantaged students making expected progress in English, and that seen nationally by non-disadvantaged students, closed by 5%, and by 10% in mathematics. In school, margins have closed completely in some years. Nonetheless, in 2014 end-of-Year 11 disadvantaged students' attainment in English was almost half a GCSE grade behind their non-disadvantaged peers in school, and nationally, and in mathematics over a full GCSE grade behind. The school's latest information, together with current work in Year 11 students' books in English and mathematics, indicate that these attainment margins are set to close to less than half a GCSE grade by the end of the academic year.
- Appropriate support is made available for students at risk of falling behind. For example, Year 7 catch-up funding has been used to provide specialist resources and teaching. The school's information on the impact of these measures shows good gains to date, especially in reading, writing and basic numeracy skills, for a large majority of students.
- The school no longer enters students early for GCSE examinations.
- The small minority of Year 12 students who follow off-site vocational courses at the Maltings College, Halifax, achieve well. They gain worthwhile qualifications in subjects such as childcare, horticulture, light vehicle maintenance and catering.

Sixth form provision is good

- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Given their well-below average starting points in Year 12, the vast majority of students make good progress in most of their academic subjects and increasingly attain challenging end of Year 13 A-level targets.
- Sixth-form students pursuing vocational and applied subjects, especially those attending off-site provision at The Maltings College, Halifax, achieve particularly well.
- As a consequence, overall sixth-form outcomes meet the national 16 to 19 interim minimum standards.
- While teaching in the sixth form is improving and is predominantly good, there remains some variation in a minority of subjects, especially in Year 13. Information about individual students' rates of progress is not used proactively enough, by all teachers, to meet all students' precise needs. As a result a minority do not yet attain high enough grades, in a minority of subjects, by the time they leave school.
- Students are positive about the quality of the careers information and guidance they receive. As a result increasing numbers enter the sixth form and continue with their courses from Year 12 into Year 13. Some students opt to take up appropriate apprenticeships or employment opportunities. The relatively small proportion of students who do not choose to move on to Year 13 is supported successfully to other destinations.
- The curriculum offers an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses and is regularly reviewed. New leadership of the sixth form has rightly identified historic shortfalls in the provision for students entering Year 12 without good GCSE qualifications in English and/or mathematics. New programmes have been introduced, as of late, and the school's information shows that higher proportions of students are on

track to leave the sixth form with at least a GCSE 'C' grade, than seen previously.

- Students show generally positive attitudes to learning, take private study time seriously, behave well and are good role models for younger students. They take seriously their roles as senior school leaders and student governors, and support the school's activities in a number of ways, for example, planning fundraising events, supporting subject teachers in lessons and during tutor time, mentoring younger students and managing sixth-form facilities and communal areas.
- Through regular tutorials, assemblies, bespoke visitors and visits, and the innovative post-16 leadership development programme, students' personal and employability skills are well developed by the time they leave school.
- The acting deputy headteacher, with the responsibility for post-16 provision, has a clear understanding of the sixth-form's strengths and areas for improvement. Appropriate tracking systems are now in place to check on students' progress, provide additional support for any who fall behind and to reduce further the variability in teaching in a minority of subjects.

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	107564
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	448973

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	683
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jayne Shackleton
Headteacher	Andrew Whitaker
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2013
Telephone number	01706 813558
Fax number	01706 814821
Email address	admin@todhigh.co.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. 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.ofsted.gov.uk

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, work-based learning and skills training, 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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2015

