

# Penistone Grammar School

Huddersfield Road, Penistone, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S36 7BX

## Inspection dates

8–9 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Achievement is good throughout the school and the sixth form.
- Standards are above average in most subjects, including in English and mathematics, by the end of Year 11 and students are on track to achieve similar standards in 2014. This represents their good progress.
- Teaching is securely good, with a growing amount that is outstanding.
- Students achieve well in the sixth form because teaching is consistently at least good. They are informed particularly well of the options available to them after school.
- Students show a desire to learn and achieve well. They behave maturely and show positive attitudes to school, learning and each other.
- Students enjoy lessons and the courses they study, which are a good match to their needs and promote good enjoyment and achievement.
- The Principal's strong leadership, supported by the senior team, has driven improvements over time. These have now impacted well on students' achievement, well-being and on the quality of teaching.
- The governing body's comprehensive knowledge, including about teaching, and its involvement in the school's work strengthens its capacity to continue improving.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding.
- Work for the more-able students does not always provide additional challenge and opportunities for them to deepen their thinking and understanding and to make consistently rapid progress.
- Marking does not regularly tell students what they have achieved and what to do next. Teachers do not check that students have followed their advice.
- Subject leaders and student leaders of learning do not consistently and rigorously check performance in their areas in order to support outstanding teaching, and students' outstanding achievement and personal development.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 46 lessons, of which 12 were observed jointly with the Principal or members of the senior leadership team. The inspectors also observed students at break and lunch times and observed tutor time.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, five groups of students, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors analysed the 85 responses to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They took the findings of the 51 staff questionnaires into account in conducting the inspection.
- The inspectors looked at the school's work, including its information about the standards and progress of students in each year group. They checked the school's records of the quality of teaching, looked at samples of students' work, and analysed policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils, including those relating to behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara O'Brien	Additional Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector
Tony Price	Additional Inspector
Irene Lavelle	Additional Inspector

# Full report

## Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for looked after children, children from service families and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), is below the national average.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- No students are educated off-site.
- The school became a training school in September 2013, through Schools Direct, and is working with Sheffield Hallam University to deliver a training programme for those wanting to become teachers. It works with the Horizon Community College in Barnsley to develop and share best practice.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding by making sure that:
  - work for the more-able students provides additional challenge, and opportunities to extend and deepen their thinking and understanding
  - marking tells students very clearly what they have achieved and what to do next, and that teachers check that students have followed their advice.
- Strengthen the impact of subject leaders and student leaders of learning through ensuring that they consistently and rigorously check performance in their areas, in order to promote outstanding teaching and students' outstanding achievement and personal development.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Students make good progress throughout the school and in the sixth form, including in English and mathematics, because teaching is consistently good.
- Until recently, the proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, was broadly average. However, the Principal's very decisive actions over recent years have resulted in improvements in teaching, performance and attitudes that have a good impact from Year 7 onwards.
- As a result standards at the end of Year 11 in 2013 and currently are well-above average in most subjects, showing good improvement, for example, in modern foreign languages and physical education. Standards in English are consistently well-above average. Previous under-achievement in mathematics and science has been reversed because teaching and leadership are both good, and as with almost all other subjects, students are on-track to attain well-above standards in 2014. The school is addressing under-achievement in core science and health and social care, with some success.
- Although the school continues to use intervention to ensure that students achieve well, it is used to boost teaching, rather than as an alternative to it.
- The potential of the more-able pupils is sometimes wasted, due to activities that do not extend their learning and thinking as they could.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their slightly above-average standards on entry. Their rate of progress has accelerated because teaching is solidly good so that standards rose at AS level in 2013. Students achieve particularly well in psychology, where teaching is outstanding. Most students complete their courses and go into further or higher education or employment at the end of Year 13. More students than in the past now go to Russell Group universities or Oxford or Cambridge, with the governing body being very pro-active in promoting greater aspirations.
- Students who have not reached the expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 receive intensive support, through 'catch-up' funding in Year 7, including in phonics (the sounds made by letters and groups of letters). Over half of the students in last year's Year 7 reached the level required by the end of the year and almost all others made good progress towards the goal.
- Most groups of students achieve similarly including disabled students and those with special educational needs. There has been good improvement in the progress made by students supported by school action, compared to last year, because of more-accurate support and very regular checking of their rate of progress.
- Pupil premium funding, which provides, for example, one-to-one tuition to improve students' specific literacy and numeracy skills and to improve attendance, is effective in narrowing the gap in attainment. In 2013 the gap in mathematics standards between eligible students and others, narrowed sharply from eight terms to three terms. In English it narrowed further from three terms to two. This exemplifies the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- The school does not enter students early for GCSE examinations, including in mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Most teaching is good, with some that is outstanding, including in the sixth form. As a result students achieve well. Older students said that the biggest improvement in the school is the quality of teaching. A few lessons require improvement.
- There is a very business-like atmosphere in many lessons, demonstrating both students' positive attitudes to learning and teachers' high expectations. There is also a supportive ethos and students are confident to offer responses even if they are not sure of their accuracy.

- Students make the most of the opportunities to participate in learning. In the sixth form, independent learning is a real strength. The teachers are skilful facilitators of learning, and students often act as teachers to other members of the group.
- Students' good understanding of the purpose of learning, a brisk pace and a range of activities are consistent strengths in teaching. All learning is linked to progress and students have specific goals to aim for.
- In the best lessons, teachers' questioning supports the quick progress of all students because it encourages them to think more widely and is matched to students' different needs. In less effective lessons, this is not the case.
- Literacy skills are increasingly integrated into other lessons. This is a real strength in the Year 7 'Bright Sparks' organisation of learning and also in subjects such as physical education. Numeracy skills are at the early stages of being promoted in most subjects, although inspectors saw some excellent practice in English.
- Although most teaching provides a range of activities to match the range of abilities represented in the class, work for the more-able students in particular does not consistently provide the extra challenge to enable their rapid progress or for them to deepen and extend their thinking and understanding. Specific targeted support is effective in raising literacy and numeracy skills.
- Similarly, although inspectors saw some outstanding marking of students' work, which clearly informed them about their achievement and what they needed to do next, especially in Spanish, this was not the case across all subjects. In a lot of lessons, there was no indication that students had taken the advice given by teachers into account in their future work.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils****are good**

- Students want to achieve well and where teaching is good and better, they show very mature attitudes to learning and a great determination to achieve the best that they can. In a few lessons, in which teaching does not involve them, they become passive learners and a few become restless.
- Conduct around the school is very good. Students appreciate the building and show respect for it as well as towards each other. Behaviour is well managed and consistently applied to those who need reminders of the school's expectations.
- Students take very seriously the opportunities for them to be involved in the school's decision-making. Their good personal development is supported by responsibilities such as participating in the appointment of staff and being prefects and young leaders. The sixth-form students contribute fully, including in their roles as peer mentors to younger students.
- Students feel safe. They speak confidently about a range of potential dangers and how to manage them, including cyber-bullying, and different types of prejudice. Students expressed confidence in the staff's willingness and capacity to help them with any problems.
- Through lessons, tutor time, assemblies and after-school activities, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is supported well. Opportunities for cultural development are much more regularly incorporated into planning than in the past.
- Attendance is just above average and continuing to improve. Sixth-form attendance is also steadily improving and is now average, because students have become more positive about school and learning, and the courses available.

**The leadership and management****are good**

- The Principal's very carefully considered plans and actions demonstrate her accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness and her strong leadership. Systems have been established to check every aspect of the school's work. They are pivotal in the improvements made in teaching and achievement.
- Improvements have been working through the school for some time, based on difficult decisions

taken in previous years and it is now that the impact of the roles and work of the effective senior leadership team has become evident. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

- The composition of the senior team matches the school's priorities. Its strength is the extensive information, based on data that leaders collect, share and act on. As a result the school knows itself well.
- The leadership of teaching is well organised. Teachers are observed regularly and staff training is based on the needs identified. School leaders increasingly provide training to strengthen performance and share best teaching practice. Teachers' performance targets are challenging, almost always measureable, and relevant. Their effectiveness in driving improvement is evident in the good progress students are making.
- The recently extended leadership is strengthening the school's capacity to improve, which is now good. Subject leaders and student leaders of learning are developing their monitoring roles within their areas, with support from senior leaders. However, leaders' checking of, for example marking, is not consistently rigorous enough in order to promote outstanding teaching, and students' achievement and personal development.
- New leaders, such as the special needs coordinator, and the director of post-16, are developing their roles quickly and have an accurate picture of the rate of students' progress in their areas.
- The courses available to pupils now stimulate their interest and enjoyment in learning and their good achievement. The 'Bright Sparks' programme of English and humanities is very effective in supporting students' achievement and well-being. Mathematics enquiry skills are being promoted well in Year 7. Courses at Key Stage 4 and post-16 provide effectively for the range of interests, needs and aspirations. Careers advice is built in to learning and students feel well informed about the full range of choices open to them.
- Links with schools and agencies broaden support and resources for the students and staff. Parents are far more supportive of the school's work than at the time of the last inspection and have fewer concerns, which the school wants to address, such as those about the more-able pupils. The school provides very regular opportunities for parents to discuss their children's learning and keep abreast with the school's new systems, such as the reporting home of students' progress. Parents appreciate this.
- The local authority continues to review the school's progress and to provide any support needed in further improving the school's effectiveness.
- **The governing body**
  - The governing body is determined to ensure that the school is as good as it can be and through its comprehensive knowledge, gained from the Principal and through independent findings, is very well placed to do so. Governors understand national data, know that, for example, the more-able students are not consistently well challenged and make sure that safeguarding practices meet the statutory requirements. The governors challenge the school's actions to ensure the school is able to continue to improve and that the actions are sustainable. This aspect is an important strength because governors have specific responsibilities, such as for teaching and learning, and meet regularly with staff to discuss performance. They know how pupil premium funding is spent, although not its impact, and understand performance-management procedures and expectations. They keep up-to-date with training.

## 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>	106653
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	425866

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>	1,570
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David O'Hara
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Higgins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 February 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01226 762114
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