

Holly Lodge Girls' College

140 Mill Lane, Liverpool, L12 7LE

Inspection dates 19–20 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The proportion of students who gain five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is well below the national average.
- The progress groups of students make, particularly those of higher and lower abilities, is not as rapid as it could be and they do not always make the good progress needed to reach the standards they should.
- The quality of teaching is too variable and is not consistently good enough to ensure students make rapid progress in their studies.
- Marking and assessment do not always allow students to develop their understanding or enable teachers to identify fully the progress students are making.
- Students are not always challenged to do their very best and teachers sometimes do not set aspirational targets for them.
- Senior leaders, including governors, do not always have a clear and accurate view of the progress being made by students of all abilities across year groups and in a wide range of subjects.
- The use of pupil premium funding has not resulted in a significant narrowing of the gap in the progress made by disadvantaged students in comparison to their classmates. The gap remains too wide.
- Strategies to support the development of mathematical skills across the school are now in place, but have not had time to make a positive impact on students' numeracy development.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are keen to develop their skills further to ensure the more rapid progress of students.
- The promotion of traditional British values, and of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.
- School leaders ensure that information, advice and guidance for students preparing for their future careers and life aspirations are good.
- The care for, and relationships of, staff to all students is good. Students say they are looked after well and feel safe in school.
- Students behave well and are courteous to each other and to staff. They are proud of their school, smart in appearance and punctual to lessons.
- Bullying is rare and students say should it happen, they know staff will deal with it swiftly.
- Attendance has risen rapidly so that it now matches the national average. Persistent absence rates continue to fall.
- Exclusions are very low overall and support for students who have difficulties with behaviour is good.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and students progress well.
- Support for literacy across the school is strong and is helping students to make better progress across all subject areas.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in lessons and parts of lessons, four of which were jointly observed with three senior leaders.
- Formal discussions were held with four groups of students, a representative from the local authority, governors and senior and middle leaders.
- Additionally, informal discussions were held with students at break time and around the school to gather their views about behaviour and learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in students' books, both as a formal exercise in mathematics, English and science, as well as in all lessons observed during the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of supporting documentation, both publicly available and that provided by the school, with regard to safeguarding and child protection, minutes of governing body meetings, performance management, progress data and external reports.
- Inspectors took into account the 57 responses to the staff questionnaire and emails from parents. At the point of the inspection, there were only 10 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View, so inspectors also took into account school leaders' own parental surveys taken over the academic year at parents' evenings.

Inspection team

Colin Scott, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Rachel Wall	Additional Inspector
Bernard Robinson	Additional Inspector
Bimla Kumari	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Holly Lodge Girls' College is smaller than the average sized-secondary school. The number on roll has reduced significantly over the last three years.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is almost twice the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is slightly below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is average.
- Some limited use of alternative provision for a few students is made, using support from:
 - Fazackerley Student Support Centre
 - New Heights School and Everton Free School
 - Alder Hey Educational Health Care.
- The school holds the Silver Quality Assurance Mark for reading.
- The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body have been in post less than a year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress of all groups of students across all subject areas, by:
 - ensuring teachers always have high expectations of their students
 - leaders always giving teachers timely and accurate information about the levels of ability of their students so that they can plan lessons that challenge them, particularly for the higher and lower abilities
 - making sure all teachers assess the progress students are making in their lessons regularly
 - ensuring the school marking policy is applied consistently by all teachers, so that students know exactly how to improve their work
 - sharing the good practice that already exists within the school to improve the quality of teaching and to support an increase in students' excitement for learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school, by:
 - developing the skills of senior and middle leaders to manage the performance of teachers through identifying accurately the progress groups of students make over a period of time
 - using pupil premium funding more effectively, so that it narrows gaps more rapidly in the progress disadvantaged students make compared to their classmates
 - developing data-tracking systems so that leaders at all levels, and teachers, can use accurate information about student's progress effectively
 - supporting governors to develop their skills in holding school leaders to account
 - ensuring governors always have the most accurate information available, particularly on the impact of the provision on all groups of students and the performance of subject areas, so that they can ask leaders searching questions about improvements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as the progress students make is not as rapid as it should be. There continues to be a large gap in the progress of disadvantaged students compared to their classmates and this gap is not closing as quickly as it should.
- The new school data systems are still developing and senior leaders do not have a clear and consistent view of the progress of groups of students in order to secure a rapid increase in the rates of improvement.
- Students' targets are based on what is expected of most of their peers nationally and are sometimes exceeded. Leaders do not always adjust these targets to take faster progress into account and, as a result, the progress students make slows.
- Leaders at all levels have not secured a consistent approach to the agreed school marking policy so that students are always aware of how to improve their progress and standards.
- The leadership of teaching is supporting staff to develop more rigorous approaches to students' learning. However, their views of the quality of teaching are not always accurate and, as a result, do not always ensure that teachers have high expectations of all students.
- There is a strong culture of care and an ethos of improving teaching which develops students well and leads to good behaviour. It prepares them for their next stages of education or training and helps them to understand the values of life in modern Britain. For example, leaders boosted students' knowledge of how democracy has developed in the United Kingdom by linking their understanding of the suffragette movement to the recent general election. This resulted in a deeper understanding of equalities and the rights of women, along with the processes by which elections are held in the United Kingdom.
- The curriculum meets the needs of learners extremely well, given the available staffing for the size of the school. Leaders support teachers successfully in running a wide variety of courses and ensure that teachers know their subjects well. This means that students are able to choose courses that suit their personal needs and promotes equality of opportunity well. There is strong provision of careers information, advice and guidance and this is helping students prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders track behaviour issues well and can identify any patterns of negative behaviour quickly. This includes racism, homophobia or bullying via social media. Students say that staff constantly support them in understanding cultures different from their own, in acting appropriately and with empathy for individuals and also in ensuring that any discrimination or misunderstanding of beliefs or faiths is challenged. These approaches ensure that good relations between students are fostered well.
- Middle leadership is good overall. Leaders are supportive of the school and senior leaders and have a good understanding of the needs of their own subject areas and some priorities of the school. Leaders have successfully used some pupil premium funding to improve attendance rates, so that disadvantaged students now attend regularly. However, this funding has not secured a rapid closing of the gaps between the progress these students make compared to that of their classmates.
- The very few students who attend alternative off-site provision are monitored well. Leaders always know where these students are, the progress they are making and what their attendance and behaviour is like. This is because there are rigorous reporting procedures between the providers and the school.
- The school receives some challenge and support from the local authority, which leaders welcome and which is having some positive impact. For example, leaders have recently undertaken training commissioned by the local authority to develop their own skills in being able to monitor the progress of students and the performance of staff more accurately. Leaders say that this is still work in progress and acknowledge that this type of training is important for all levels of leadership, so that they have a clearer view of performance measures.
- Leaders' views of areas for development for the school are mostly accurate. The headteacher has an astute understanding of priorities. For example, literacy across the school is now strong as a result of being made a priority and supports students' progress across many subjects.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good and has led to higher rates of progress for students than seen in the main school.
- The use of 'catch-up' funding to support Year 7 students is used well to enable less literate students to make rapid gains in their reading ages, so that they can access what the school has to offer successfully. Some of this funding supports transition activities from primary school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, of its care for students and of the guidance staff give to the children. They are also very supportive of the leadership and management of the school. Staff also recognise that increasing students' rates of progress is of vital importance if the school is to improve

further.

- The school ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are effective.

■ The governance of the school:

- While governors are committed to the future of the school and its students, their practice is not as effective as it should be.
- They have supported the headteacher well in dealing with the recent and ongoing restructuring of the school workforce. Governors and the headteacher have worked hard to ensure that this has been carried out with diligence, sensitivity and care and to secure both the future financial strength of the school and the curriculum the school can offer.
- Sometimes governors do not always challenge school leaders as fully as they might. They too readily accept the information they are given by school leaders with regard to the progress students make. They do not check on the validity of that information, for example by commissioning external reports of how well the school is doing.
- Governors are fully aware of relevant school policies. However, they are not as clear about the impact of these policies, for example in relation to how the school promotes traditional British values.
- Teachers have targets set by their leaders. Governors do not allow staff to progress through the pay scales automatically, if their students do not reach their achievement targets.
- The use of the pupil premium has been monitored by governors and they can describe the impact it has had on improving the attendance of disadvantaged students. However, they are not clear about the impact the funding is having on closing gaps in achievement between disadvantaged students and their classmates.
- The relatively new Chair and vice-chair of the governing body acknowledge that current governors' practice is not sharp enough to bring about a more rapid rate of student progress and school improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students is good.
- Students are well dressed, punctual to lessons and extremely courteous to members of staff and each other. They are happy and in lessons, where challenge is realistic, they relish the work and get excited about what they are doing. Their understanding of different faiths, cultures, backgrounds, lifestyles and beliefs is good.
- Both staff and parents are overwhelmingly positive in their view that students' behaviour makes a good contribution to learning. Students interviewed were also keen to say that poor behaviour is rare, both in classrooms and at break times.
- Attitudes to learning are mostly positive. Students are keen to do well and eager to learn. Scrutiny of books shows that in most lessons students care about their work and that they act upon any challenges given to them by their teachers. However, not all teachers challenge students in line with the school's learning policy, and in those few lessons students' attitudes to learning are not as positive.
- The monitoring of behaviour for the few students who attend alternative off-site provision shows that they behave as well as their classmates in school.
- Inspectors were impressed with the movement of students around the school and the way they behaved as they walked between lessons and interacted with each other during break times.
- Incidences of low-level disruption to lessons are rare, but students say they do occur, particularly in those few lessons where teachers' expectations are not high enough.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students say that they feel safe and are safe. Both staff and parents agree with this view. In practical lessons they describe how they are reminded constantly about the use of safety equipment and they can describe in detail how they keep themselves safe in those lessons.
- Students say that there continues to be a small concern around the use of social media in and outside of school. They say the school gives them clear guidance about how to remain safe when online. Leaders express their occasional frustration at the increase in social media and how students sometimes do not

keep themselves as safe as they should. However, they remain resolute in continuing to drive home to students the safety message regarding all types of online behaviour. Students are responding well to this.

- The work of leaders to promote good attendance is working well. Despite the school having historically low rates of attendance, leaders have been successful in ensuring that levels are now matching the national average for secondary schools and are higher than for similar schools.
- Persistent absence rates remain low because of leaders' relentless pursuit of students who take too much time off school. There are now no groups of students for whom attendance at the school is worse than other groups.
- School leaders are successful in ensuring that exclusion rates remain low compared to similar schools and, because behaviour policies are effective, permanent exclusions have not been used for some time.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time it has not secured good progress for students in Key Stages 3 and 4, particularly in reading, English and mathematics. While teaching is improving, it is not consistently good.
- The challenge for groups of students varies across subjects and year groups and is not always set at appropriate levels for students' abilities. This is particularly the case for those students of higher and lower ability.
- Teaching in English, supported through leaders' priority of promoting literacy across the curriculum, is improving steadily and the progress of students is more consistent. There are also indications of an improvement in teaching in humanities and science, especially in Key Stage 3.
- Leaders have already and accurately identified that numeracy skills are underdeveloped across the school. It is now a school priority because staff are aware that this lack of numeracy development is hindering the progress students can make in some subjects, in the use of formulae in science, for example.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed to help students practise and reinforce their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. Teachers do not always know clearly the levels of ability of the students they teach. On these occasions, lessons are not planned or pitched appropriately to stretch students to do their very best.
- Marking is not always regular enough to ensure teachers are fully aware of the progress students are making. Similarly, some marking does not follow the agreed school policy and as a result, students are not always clear about how they can improve their work.
- Scrutiny of students' work shows that at times the work does not always challenge them enough. For example, they often get all of their answers right and they are quick to complete the work. This indicates that at times the work given may not be appropriate for their needs, as it does not stretch and challenge them effectively.
- Students say that they receive appropriate homework and that, when it is given, it supports their work in the classroom well.
- In lessons where levels of student progress are high, it is clear that this is the result of teaching which inspires, enthuses and excites them to do their very best because of challenges which stretch them and make them think deeply.
- Teachers know their subjects well and students are confident in what they are being taught. Teachers have strong established relationships with their students which result in a positive atmosphere for learning.
- The use of other adults in classrooms supports learning well. They are deployed effectively by the class teachers to ensure students are supported fully in their studies.
- Questioning is good overall. Questions help to develop students' thinking and deepen their understanding.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of students requires improvement because they enter the school with well below average attainment and over time they reach standards that are also well below average by the end of Year 11. In 2014, the number of good passes students gained in their GCSE examinations, including English and mathematics, fell further than it did nationally.
- In publicly available data in 2014, the progress rates across all groups of students, including those who speak English as an additional language, in both English and mathematics was below the national

average. The gaps between the progress of disadvantaged students compared to their classmates in school remained wide. Over time, for both subjects, they are slowly narrowing, although indications from the school's own data show that this year the gaps are expected to remain wide, until reducing again in 2016. This is due in part to the ability levels of the students in the current Year 11.

- In mathematics in 2014, disadvantaged students were about a grade behind their classmates and just over a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally. In English they were just under a grade behind their classmates and a grade behind non-disadvantaged students nationally.
- Current progress measures across all year groups across a range of subjects indicate that there are improvements, for example in humanities and science in Key Stage 3, but attainment remains variable across the school.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are supported reasonably well. They continue to make progress that is slightly slower than their classmates, but which requires improvement overall.
- The few students who attend alternative off-site provision make the same rate of progress as their peers in school.
- Higher ability students are not always reaching the standards in GCSE examinations of which they are capable, particularly in English and mathematics. However, there are some subjects where more do attain the highest results, in science subjects, for example. This is because they are suitably challenged in these subjects.
- The school has not entered any students early for GCSE this year.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students who study vocational subjects leave with standards significantly above national averages and those who study academic subjects leave with standards broadly in line with national averages, but with an improving picture. Given their starting points, this indicates good progress and achievement.
- Leadership is good. Leaders are more accurate in their judgement of the progress being made in the sixth form and of the quality of teaching students are receiving. Teaching is good and is leading to more rapid progress over time.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that many students choose to stay on in the sixth form from Holly Lodge Girls' College Year 11, due to good support and guidance and a rich curriculum.
- Sixth form students are extremely complimentary about the support they receive and the care of their teachers. They say they are happy and safe in school at all times.
- There are no significant differences in the progress different groups of students make compared to their classmates across the sixth form.
- Support for students to explore potential higher education routes or careers is strong. Students say that their teachers regularly talk to them about their future options and help to give them good guidance in developing their ideas.
- Behaviour across the sixth form is outstanding. Students have high levels of personal aspiration and show responsible attitudes to learning. They are extremely courteous to each other and to their staff. They say misbehaviour simply does not happen in the sixth form.

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	104688
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	461903

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	751
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hayley Todd
Headteacher	Julia Tinsley
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2012
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