

# Rose Bridge High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106522
<b>Local authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	377419
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marguerite Murphy HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	706
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Harmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debra Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Holt Street Higher Ince Wigan WN1 3HD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons taught by 36 teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, governors, members of staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including its self-evaluation and improvement plans, safeguarding policies and procedures, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's analysis and tracking of information on students' attainment and progress. They analysed and considered the content of 28 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 21 by staff and 84 questionnaires completed by a representative sample of students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that standards are rising, particularly in mathematics, following weaker achievement in that subject over the last three years.
- Whether students are making good enough progress from their starting points on entry to the school, to maintain its very positive profile of 'value-added' indicators over the last four years.
- How effectively the school is working to improve attendance and students' workplace and other skills, to contribute to their future economic well-being.
- How successfully the relatively new senior leadership team is working to improve the consistency of teaching and learning and to raise attainment.

## Information about the school

Rose Bridge is a smaller-than-average secondary school. Most students are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. A much higher-than-average proportion of students, over 40%, is known to be eligible for free school meals. More than a third of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well-above average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special needs. The school is a specialist science college.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Rose Bridge is a good school that has several outstanding features to its work. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided for students, along with highly effective partnerships, make an excellent contribution to students' learning and well-being. Students feel very safe and valued as individuals. They are proud of their school, get along well together and demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school and 'the staff are great' was a common remark made by students who spoke to inspectors. The view is, evidently, reciprocated, as most teachers enjoy their work and praise the 'great students' highly. Parents and carers agree that their children are happy at Rose Bridge, with typical views being that 'I couldn't ask any more of the school' and 'it seems to be going from strength to strength'.

Students' overall attainment in GCSE examinations with mathematics and English included is low. That is because levels of attainment have not risen at the same rate as they have nationally and were just below the latest government minimum target levels in 2011. However, that masks the school's considerable successes in its specialist subject of science and also in ensuring that most students make good and sometimes outstanding progress from low starting points. As a result, the proportion of students who achieve five GCSE or equivalent passes at grade C and above in a range of subjects is in line with the national average. The school is aware of the limitations of some students' application of language skills, including their ability to speak confidently and fluently in a range of situations. The limitations can make it difficult for some students to make the best possible progress in some subjects. At present, there are missed opportunities for support staff to be deployed more effectively to help move students' learning on at a more rapid rate in lessons.

The school is particularly successful at removing barriers to learning for students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, who are supported exceptionally well. The relatively new senior leadership team articulates a very clear and ambitious vision for the school, with raising attainment at the heart of the agenda. Staff at all levels share that vision, feel valued and involved, and recognise their own contribution to what the school is aiming to achieve. The school's improvement plans are based on extensive and accurate monitoring and evaluation of its performance. Although it has yet to see the full impact of its work in raised attainment, the school's data and recent assessments show that most students are on track to achieve very challenging targets. That is possible because of the

improvements made in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. It is now more consistently good and in around 40% of lessons teaching and learning are outstanding. That is a good example of the positive impact of senior and middle leaders in improving teaching and learning across all subject areas, including mathematics. It also demonstrates the school's good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Raise standards of attainment to at least average across the school by:
  - capitalising on the now securely good and often outstanding teaching to ensure that this accelerates the rates of progress made by students in all subjects
  - ensuring that teachers' questioning skills are used consistently to develop students' deeper understanding and ability to consider carefully and expand upon their responses
  - improving students' ability to practise and apply their language skills in a wider range of contexts, in order to express their ideas more fluently and articulately when talking about their learning and demonstrating their understanding
  - ensuring that the deployment of support staff in lessons is matched closely to students' specific needs and provides very precise levels of support and challenge, to help move their learning on at a rapid rate.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

<b>2</b>
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Students enjoy their learning and achieve well, making good and sometimes better progress in lessons and over time. That is particularly the case in subjects such as science, performing arts, art and design, and religious studies. Taking into account their low starting points, students make good progress in English, although writing presentation and oral communication skills are variable, particularly in lower-ability sets. Students apply themselves well in lessons and respond with enthusiasm to practical activities, working collaboratively and solving problems. That led to outstanding progress in music, drama and dance in lessons observed in Years 7 and 10 and in food technology in Year 8. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress to their peers. High-attaining students enjoy the competitive element of challenges provided in many lessons, so that they, too, make good progress. On the very few occasions when learning is less productive, some students lose motivation as the work is not matched precisely to their needs and ability levels. Following a drop in mathematics attainment last year, improvements in the department are helping to raise achievement in the subject, particularly in Key Stage 4. For example, students in a Year 11 lesson were highly motivated and involved in learning about indices and standard form notation and made outstanding progress.

Students have an excellent understanding of unsafe situations and of how to keep themselves safe, whether at school, in the community, or when using the internet. They can explain how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and most students take the relevant factors into account, including good participation in sporting activities.

Students make a good contribution to their school and wider community. They volunteer enthusiastically to take on responsibilities such as peer- and assertive mentoring and school council membership. Students use their initiative also to set up activities themselves, like the 'Veg Bunch' and Eco School project. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their understanding and appreciation of what makes their school a harmonious community. They are very supportive of each other and value the differences in peoples' backgrounds, personalities and beliefs.

Students' basic skills are improving rapidly and they apply these well in a range of subjects. Their good personal skills, including in information and communication technology (ICT), and teamwork also stand them in good stead for their future economic well-being. Most students go on to further education, employment or training when they leave Year 11.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	4
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Common features in the great majority of teaching across the school include:

- excellent and mutually respectful relationships between staff and students
- carefully planned lessons including a good range of activities and interesting resources or artefacts
- teachers' excellent subject knowledge, enthusiasm and high expectations resulting in good or outstanding levels of engagement and progress
- lessons adapted carefully to meet students' needs, whatever their ability
- careful attention to the use of assessment to support learning, whether by well-targeted and challenging questioning, or verbal and written feedback to students about their current levels of work and how to reach the next
- effective classroom and behaviour management, using positive strategies to praise and engage students while still challenging them to achieve more

<sup>1</sup>The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

- opportunities provided for students to reflect on what they have learned and engage in self- and peer-assessment.

The most effective teaching uses a combination of these elements, coupled with an excellent knowledge of individual students' strengths and weaknesses, to ensure that their learning is moved on at a rapid pace. Focused and purposeful teaching in science incorporates higher-order questioning often to draw out students' understanding. When that was seen in a Year 7 lesson, for instance, students could demonstrate their excellent progress and produce written work that flowed more clearly. That kind of questioning is not yet consistent across the school. On the very few occasions when teaching is satisfactory, it takes less account of students' individual needs and prior learning; teacher direction rather than students' independent working dominates the lesson and expectations are insufficiently high. Consequently, some students lose motivation and engage in off-task talk or show less positive attitudes towards their learning.

The good curriculum is adapted carefully to meet students' needs and has a strong focus on developing their basic skills. It is enhanced by a wide range of enrichment activities and after-school clubs. Cross-curricular provision in literacy and ICT has been more evident than in numeracy, although this is now being developed more fully. There are innovative elements to the school's regularly reviewed curriculum, for example, in the highly tailored programmes to meet the needs of students who are at risk of underachievement, or whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The school's ethos of inclusion is embedded deeply in its outstanding levels of care and the way in which staff are committed to 'going the extra mile' for the students, including those who are gifted and talented. The school works successfully with families and external agencies to promote good attendance and punctuality and reduce exclusions. As a result, attendance is in line with the national average and rising. The levels of pastoral support and use of internal exclusion have reduced the overall exclusion rate significantly. Excellent systems are established to ensure that students are provided with appropriate work at home from day one of any fixed-term exclusion.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteachers work very well together to form a strong and committed senior leadership team that is well respected by the staff and students. Staff feel empowered to contribute to school improvement and are held accountable for the progress made by students. The extended leadership includes enthusiastic middle leaders with a good range of experience and skills. Some leaders are at the early stage of taking full responsibility for driving improvement in their subjects, so it is too soon to see the full impact of their work. Good practice is identified and shared with colleagues in an open and collegiate approach and team-

teaching and coaching are a regular feature. A systematic programme of monitoring activities is used to check the quality of teaching and plan whole-staff and individual training opportunities; this has contributed to recent improvements.

Students at Rose Bridge are very clear that this is a school in which all students are given equal opportunities to succeed and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Leaders analyse the progress made by all students and take action to close any identified gaps between different groups of learners. The school has identified instances where some students with special educational needs and/or disabilities have made outstanding progress within its 'small learning community'. It recognises the need also to increase the proportion of higher-attaining students who reach the highest grades in GCSE courses.

The governing body is effective in offering challenge and support to the school and is involved increasingly in decision making at a strategic level. The school adopts high-quality practice and procedures for safeguarding students, including comprehensive risk assessments and up-to-date staff training. The child protection policy is an excellent resource for staff and the governing body to refer to. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. It is informed by an analysis of the school's context and evaluation of the impact of its work to embed the values of cohesion within the school, its community and beyond. There are useful links with local and national organisations that contribute to the curriculum and there are developing links internationally with schools in South Africa and France.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed wholly positive views about all aspects of the school's work. The response rate was quite low because the school had recently sent out its own questionnaire and analysed the responses, which were positive also. No individual concerns were raised by parents and carers during the inspection. The team's findings confirmed that they are justified in feeling happy that the school provides very well for their children. That matches the views expressed by staff and almost all students, who are proud to be members of the Rose Bridge community.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rose Bridge High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 706 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	50	13	46	0	0	1	4
The school keeps my child safe	19	68	9	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	75	6	21	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	64	9	32	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	68	8	29	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	50	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	46	13	46	1	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	14	50	12	43	0	0	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	61	10	36	0	0	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	68	8	29	0	0	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	57	10	36	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	17	61	8	29	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	75	6	21	0	0	1	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <p>The school's capacity for sustained improvement. Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. The quality of teaching. The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</p>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 November 2011

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Rose Bridge High School, Wigan, WN1 3HD**

Thank you for your help during the school's recent inspection. Inspectors enjoyed talking with many of you in lessons, meetings and around the school, and hearing your views. We can understand why you and your teachers are proud to be members of the Rose Bridge community and enjoy working and learning there. Everyone we spoke to believes that it is an excellent school. The inspection team agreed that there are some outstanding elements to the school's work, although its overall effectiveness is good. That is because the standards of attainment you reach by the time you leave are still well-below average in a key indicator that the government has set as a new minimum target: that is, the proportion of students achieving five GCSEs at grade C or above with English and mathematics included is low. That said, you are making good and sometimes outstanding progress from your starting points. That shows particularly in your achievements across a range of GCSE and equivalent examinations in different subjects. Also, there is clear evidence that attainment is rising in mathematics as well as English now, due to the school's good leadership and management, and that the school's challenging targets for next year's results in these subjects are achievable. Raising attainment is also the improvement target that inspectors have set for the school. All of you can help to achieve this, by always attending regularly and challenging yourselves to learn as much as you can in every lesson.

Two of the factors in your obvious enjoyment of school and good attitudes and behaviour are the consistently good and sometimes outstanding teaching and the fact that you feel exceptionally safe and valued as individuals. The latter is due to the outstanding care, guidance and support and safeguarding procedures in the school. The procedures are particularly successful in ensuring that you are supported during any periods of difficulty, whether through personal circumstances, or problems with your learning. You know how to seek help and the school provides just what you need, supported by its outstanding work with other partners, such as the on-site Excellence Centre and the social, health, police and other external services, for example. Those of you who access the school's small learning community also fully appreciate the excellent quality of support you receive there.

Well done and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marguerite Murphy  
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)