

# Walton High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	124416
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380890
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Ann Ashdown

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 students</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of students</b>	Mixed
Gender of students in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of students on the school roll</b>	1285
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	283
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ben Rowell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Neil Finlay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	The Rise Walton-on-the-Hill ST17 0LJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 356300
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 356300
<b>Email address</b>	office@walton.staffs.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	30–31 January 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown	Additional inspector
Raymond Biglin	Additional inspector
Stephen Howland	Additional inspector
Michael Marks	Additional inspector
Renee Robinson	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 32 teachers teaching 32 lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the assistant headteacher. In addition, an inspector visited a guided reading session and listened to students read. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and school staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at students' books, progress data, safeguarding information, and other documentation. On the second day of the inspection, whilst the normal timetable was suspended, the inspection team made a series of short visits to a wide range of activities designed to promote students' personal, social and health education. They also undertook additional scrutiny of the work in students' books. Inspectors analysed 263 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from students and staff.

## Information about the school

This is an above average-sized school which has specialist status in science. An average proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups whilst a below average proportion speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is below average. A well below average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It has gained Healthy School status and holds International School and Dyslexia Friendly Awards.

The school is part of the post-16 Stafford Collegiate of sixth forms and Stafford College. Students from other schools also attend the sixth form.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of students</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of students</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It continues to improve because it is well led and managed by a very effective headteacher and senior team who have a relentless and successful focus on improving teaching and learning and accelerating students' progress.
- Students enter the school with attainment which is above average. All groups of students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students' attainment is well above average in examinations at the end of Year 11.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Student's progress accelerates in the sixth form because teaching is consistently good or outstanding. A level examination results indicate that progress was outstanding in 2011.
- Teaching and learning are good. The majority of teaching is good and in some lessons it is outstanding. Teaching across the school is never less than satisfactory. Most teachers plan well structured lessons, have high expectations of their students, and ask them perceptive and challenging questions. In satisfactory lessons the pace of learning is slower because work is not as well matched to students' needs and insufficient use is made of assessment data to plan learning.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Typically, students have good, and occasionally outstanding, attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. Most behave well in lessons and around the school. They show kindness and respect for each other, staff and visitors. Students say they feel safe in school and their attendance is above average.
- On the basis of accurate school self-evaluation, members of the governing body, leaders and managers have identified clear priorities for school improvement. For example, the school recognises the need to improve communications with parents and carers which, as a small minority of parents and carers commented, are presently underdeveloped and do not allow them to fully support their children's learning.

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

- Further improve the quality of the teaching so that no lessons are less than good and more are outstanding by:
  - making full and consistent use of assessment data to plan learning
  - ensuring work is always closely matched to students' needs.
  
- Improve communications with parents and carers to enable them to fully support their children's learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

In lessons students were seen to enjoy learning and achieve well. Most concentrate on the task in hand, answer questions readily and are keen to succeed. In a particularly successful Year 10 lesson students made rapid progress and enjoyed learning as they explored the merits of alternative sources of energy. Students enthusiastically took up opportunities to work independently, think carefully about their answers and reflect on their learning. Work in students' books, that displayed on walls and the school's own tracking system all confirmed that all groups of students are achieving well.

Most parents and carers agree with the inspection findings that their children make good progress and that the basic skills of communication, reading, writing and mathematics are being developed well. Students' good progress in reading was confirmed when inspectors listened to Year 7 learners read. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers because they receive timely and well focused help and support from specialist teachers. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with English as an additional language also make good progress. Their overall attainment is above average and there are no gaps between their performance and that of their peers.

From above average starting points, lesson observations and examination results show that students achieve well from Year 7 to Year 11. Attainment in GCSE examinations has been significantly above average overall since the last inspection. Attainment is highest and students' progress most rapid in English. In English lessons students were seen making good progress and enjoying learning as they for example, studied characters from the 'Merchant of Venice' and in another successful lesson studied black and white film footage of life in Ireland. Progress in other subjects, particularly in mathematics, is now accelerating further because of the school's successful intervention strategies including the appointment of new staff, changes to the curriculum and improved teaching.

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Students' attainment at A level has risen steadily since the last inspection. Examination results in 2011 were above average and students made outstanding progress from their starting points at the beginning of Year 12.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching and learning are good overall. Most parents and carers are in agreement that their children are well taught. In the best lessons teachers have expert subject knowledge, levels of pace and challenge are high and a wide range of different teaching and learning styles are used to ensure all students make maximum progress. These qualities are particularly apparent in sixth form lessons, where teaching and learning seen during the inspection was never less than good. In the majority of lessons across the school, teachers use varied resources to engage the interest of their classes and there is a good balance between teacher-led tasks and opportunities for students to learn independently.

Teachers make work relevant and enjoyable by using contemporary analogies and presenting tasks in an interesting way. For example, in a science lesson about displacement reactions, analogies from the worlds of film and football were used to good effect to increase both students' understanding of the subject and their enjoyment of the learning. Most lessons are well planned and structured so students have a clear focus for their learning. Teachers have good relationships with their students and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere of respect and trust. Judicious use of praise, well-targeted questioning and careful checking of students' learning are all regular features of lessons at Walton High. In some lessons, work is not as well matched to students' needs and there are fewer opportunities for independent learning. In these lessons the pace of learning, although satisfactory, is slower. Students' work is marked regularly and they are given constructive feedback on how to improve. In some subjects and by some teachers there are examples of exemplary marking and assessment, however this excellent practice is not yet consistent across the school. Assessment data is not yet used consistently to plan the next stages of students' learning.

Teachers use the well planned curriculum to extend students' skills and understanding and to promote their spiritual, social moral and cultural development in lessons. Spiritual awareness is promoted well, especially through high quality work in art and music. During a series of challenging lessons based around an enterprise theme, Year 10 students worked very effectively in groups and teams to design, cost, produce and sell a range of attractive calendars.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are good. Students typically behave well when moving around the school and show politeness and consideration towards each other, staff and visitors. A small minority of parents and carers and a similar proportion of students who responded to the inspectors' questionnaire expressed concerns about behaviour in classrooms. Inspectors followed up these concerns and found behaviour in lessons

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to be good and any low level disruption in classes to be well managed by staff. In some lessons, particularly in the sixth form, students' attitudes to learning are excellent. Students say they feel safe in school and are confident that staff will support them if they have worries or concerns. Incidents of bullying, including those of cyber-bullying, are rare. Those that do occur are recorded and procedures are in place to deal with them effectively. The personal, social and health education programme ensures that students have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Students clearly understand the dangers associated with, for example, drink and drugs. In a particularly graphic session on the importance of road safety, sixth form students were left in no doubt about the dangers of driving. Students are punctual to lessons. Attendance is above average and improving and the small number of students who are persistent absentees has reduced further.

### **Leadership and management**

Members of the governing body, leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. All have a shared vision for further school improvement which is clearly communicated to all staff. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and students' progress is tracked carefully. Good quality, flexible professional development has contributed greatly to improvements in teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics and science, and to an increase in the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.

On the basis of its good leadership and management and its track record of improvement the school has good capacity to improve further. It has identified appropriate priorities for improvement such as improving the school's engagement with parents and carers and was therefore not surprised that a significant minority of parents and carers have concerns about this aspect of the school's work. Comments in response to the inspection questionnaire highlighted a range of areas including students' progress and homework where parents and carers felt the school did not keep them sufficiently well informed.

Members of the governing body are very supportive of the school, are kept well informed by the headteacher and are fully involved in its strategic development. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements and give no cause for concern. Staff are trained well in child protection procedures and a culture of safety is promoted throughout the school. All students are given good equal opportunities to succeed and this is reflected in the good progress that all groups of students make. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school has forged good links with other schools, particularly through its status as a specialist science college. These links both extend the curriculum and help to ensure students make a smooth transition from primary to secondary school.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. It provides students with a suitable range of option choices which are a good match for their differing needs. A well organised, varied and challenging personal, social and health education programme is delivered through a series of dedicated half day sessions which are spread throughout the

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year. This makes a valuable contribution to students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and further enriched by a range of visits, visitors to the school and links with local businesses and organisations. Students speak very enthusiastically about activities as varied as visits to the Ministry of Defence, language and history trips to Europe, sporting successes, fund raising for charities and their work as peer mentors and senior students. Links with other schools and a college through the Stafford Collegiate help to provide an excellent sixth form curriculum. This allows sixth form students to choose from a very wide range of subjects and courses which provide an excellent preparation for higher education or employment.



## 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 students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students.
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 students. 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the students' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of students at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well students behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Students' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well students acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the students' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe students are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Students' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



1 February 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Walton High School, Walton-on-the-Hill ST17 0LJ**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school this week. A particular thank you to those who read aloud to us, shared your views by filling in our questionnaires and discussed with us in such a balanced way the qualities of your school. Please thank your parents and carers who also filled in our questionnaires.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a good school which continues to improve.
- Your achievement is good because you make good progress and your attainment is above average.
- Students in the sixth form make outstanding progress.
- The teaching you receive is good.
- The way your school is led and managed and the curriculum you follow are good.
- Although a small minority of you, and your parents and carers, expressed some concerns about behaviour in lessons, we found behaviour to be good overall and, in some lessons we saw, your attitudes to learning were outstanding.
- Your school ensures you are kept safe.

This is what we have asked your school to do to improve further.

- Make better use of information gained from assessing your work to plan your learning.
- Ensure work in lessons is always closely matched to your needs.
- Improve communications with your parents and carers to enable them to fully support you in your learning.

All of you can help your school improve further by continuing to attend regularly and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely  
Ann Ashdown  
Lead Inspector

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