

# Witton Park High School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119730
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	379879
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Patrick Geraghty HMI

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,054
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Hollings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dean Logan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Buncer Lane Blackburn BB2 6TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 264551
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 693699
<b>Email address</b>	witton.park@blackburn.gov.uk

---



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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

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

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

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

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



© Crown copyright 2012

## Introduction

### Inspection team

Patrick Geraghty  
Christine Addison  
Mark Shenton  
Robert Birtwell

Her Majesty's Inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 36 teachers teaching 37 lessons, of which two were joint observations with members of the senior team. In addition, inspectors conducted behaviour and work scrutiny walks. Meetings were held with four groups of students, a member of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and school staff, including senior and middle managers. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the most recent school self-evaluation, development plan, and safeguarding and equalities policies. Also, they analysed 230 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by students and staff.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. About fifty percent of students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is high. The percentage of students with special educational needs is above average as is the percentage with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

The school specialises in business and enterprise. A second specialism in science was added in 2009. Since its last inspection in 2006, a new headteacher has been appointed and senior management responsibilities have been re-structured. The school has a number of awards including Investors in People and Healthy School status. The school will move into a new purpose-built campus, adjacent to its present site, in September 2012

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school which has improved over the last three years. Parents, carers, students and staff are highly supportive of the current drive for further and accelerated improvement. Results at GCSE are improving but the school acknowledges the need to accelerate and sustain further improvement so that they match and then exceed the national average. In particular, the school recognises the need to improve results in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 and to enhance students’ abilities to read critically and write accurately.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving. There is much good and better teaching but there still remains a significant amount which is satisfactory. A strong focus on the development of literacy and communication skills is positively impacting on the progress that students are making at Key Stage 3. The school acknowledges the need to embed this further across all provision and especially at Key Stage 4.
- The behaviour of students is good and they make a significant contribution to a harmonious school community. Students feel safe and confident within school. Attendance has improved and exclusions are significantly reduced. Students have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures and demonstrate respect for each other and adults. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and when they do occur are always dealt with quickly and effectively.
- The headteacher and senior staff have established a culture of high aspiration and continuous improvement. These strategies are beginning to impact as examination results and the quality of teaching improves. The governing body is highly supportive of the direction taken by senior leaders. The school knows its weaknesses, areas of improvement and what it wants to achieve. Middle managers and staff are supportive of this direction and of the stronger quality assurance systems established. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment and achievement more rapidly as measured by five GCSE grades A\* to C including English and mathematics by:
  - raising and sustaining attainment in English and mathematics so that students make at least good progress in these areas
  - improving the attainment and progress made by White British girls
  - embed literacy across all provision so that students' writing and comprehension skills are improved.
  
- Further increase the proportion of outstanding and good teaching by:
  - sharing best practice within the school so that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are tackled and all students have the opportunity to engage in consistently challenging learning
  - ensuring questioning is used effectively to challenge individual students according to their needs
  - promoting a greater focus on independent and group learning skills across all provision
  - ensuring that the pace and variety of activities in lessons enable students to be challenged and progress in their learning.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Over a period of three years the proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has risen. However, attainment remains below the national average in this key indicator and the school recognises the need for further and sustained improvement. The most recent modular examination results and scrutiny of current tracking information indicates that the improvement trend will accelerate in 2012. Gaps in performance between groups of students, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals, are narrowing as a result of focused intervention. However, this is not the case for White British girls who continue to underperform.

Students make satisfactory progress set against below average attainment on entry. Students in the best lessons demonstrate high levels of engagement, and enjoyment. In these lessons they are developing independent learning skills. These qualities were exemplified in a religious education class where students scurried productively between groups exchanging information and descriptors on the comparative beliefs of different religions. They buzzed with curiosity as they both challenged and informed each other. Students with special educational needs and those with disabilities receive good support and make similar progress to their peers.

A significant proportion of students enter the school in Year 7 with weaknesses in reading and writing. The school has developed well focused strategies to ensure that more make good progress. Year 7 and 8 work has a strong and developing focus on enabling improvement in literacy and numeracy and in building communication and learning skills. The scrutiny of work and lesson observation evidence in Years 10 and 11 indicates that too

many students continue to make grammatical and technical errors and that their reading skills do not always allow for a secure understanding of texts. The school acknowledges the need to further embed literacy across the curriculum. Questionnaire responses from parents and carers were very positive about the level of progress made by their children.

## **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. The majority of teaching observed was good, however, there remains a significant amount of satisfactory teaching. No inadequate teaching was observed. The quality of teaching over time is not yet good enough to ensure that all students are making good and consistent progress and attaining well at Key Stage 4. In the best lessons, students are engaged and respond with enthusiasm to the variety of activities and opportunities to develop their understanding and skills. Well- focused questioning enables students to develop thinking skills. Teachers use praise and encouragement to promote high expectations. Resources are well designed and used effectively with good use of technology to support learning. These lessons are characterised by enthusiasm, good pace, student engagement, challenge and high expectations.

In the satisfactory lessons, progress is slower and opportunities are missed to increase student motivation and develop their ownership of learning. Teaching is primarily teacher led and there are few opportunities for collaborative learning. Work is not sufficiently tailored to meet all students' needs. In some of these lessons the planning of group and paired work did not promote co-operative learning for all students. Questioning is not used effectively to develop and probe understanding.

Students' work is marked regularly and frequently across many lessons. Marking generally provides students with clear information about next step improvement. In the majority of lessons teachers set clear, realistic and ambitious targets for students. Assessment for learning was seen at its best in an outstanding science lessons: here clear progress for all students was evidenced through the use of an assessment wheel and the constant checking of progress through focused questioning. However, weaknesses in vocabulary and the technical and grammatical features of students' writing remain an impediment to accelerated progress at Key Stage 4. Questionnaire responses from parents and carers were very positive about the quality of teaching. However, some students expressed concern that they were not always sufficiently challenged in some lessons.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students overwhelmingly say that they feel safe and they behave very well, both in lessons and around the school. Movement around the school is safe and calm despite some congested areas. Students are punctual to lessons. Teachers manage behaviour calmly and positively. Relationships throughout the school are good. Staff and students acknowledged significant improvements in behaviour over the last two years as a result of well-focused strategies and a clear and well supported rewards system. Students have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures other than their own and demonstrate tolerance and respect and make strong contributions to the establishment of a harmonious school community. Students reported no concerns over racism and any type of bullying. Exclusions have been significantly reduced. Well-considered and robust attendance strategies have enabled attendance rates to improve and they are currently high. Students are given responsibilities which they welcome. There are very effective peer mentoring and school prefect systems.

The behaviour referral unit is well managed and provides a very supportive learning environment for students who sometimes struggle to manage their behaviour. Students have a good understanding of safety issues relating to their own health and well-being, because these aspects are well covered through the curriculum and the pastoral system.

Students appreciated and are highly confident of the guidance and direction offered by teachers and other school staff. Transition arrangements are very effective from primary schools and students settle into school quickly, with confidence and enjoyment. Well-developed partnerships with external agencies complement the high quality support offered by the school for all its students. Progression rates to further education are high.

Students confirmed that incidents of bullying were rare and when they occur are dealt with firmly and quickly. Parental questionnaires reflected a high level of confidence with the school. A minority of parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour. These concerns were not confirmed by the lessons observed by inspectors and the observation of students' behaviour at the start and end of school and at break and lunch times. Inspectors have asked the school to consult with parents and carers more regularly on behaviour policy and practice. Safeguarding is good with procedures that meet requirements and are regularly reviewed. Systems are robust.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides strong strategic leadership, with a clear vision and focus on embedding an aspirational and high performance culture within the school. He is ably supported by a strong senior leadership team. They have embedded robust tracking and monitoring systems and a focus on promoting a culture of challenging teaching and active learning. This approach has brought significant changes to the school over the last two years which are beginning to impact positively on students' performance. The collection, presentation and analysis of data to promote improved performance are good at a senior level and are being embedded at a middle management level. Systems are established to regularly monitor students' work, teachers' planning and the quality of teaching and learning. Middle managers are more accountable for the performance of their areas. The quality of teaching is improving. The monitoring of teaching and provision of professional development opportunities to enhance it further are effective. Self-evaluation is generally accurate, the school know its strengths and weaknesses and it has good capacity for further improvement.

The school's broad and flexible curriculum has impacted on improving students' outcomes. The school consistently reviews the curriculum to better meet the needs of students. At Key Stage 3, improving literacy support has impacted on improved student attainment and progress. There is a wide range of GCSE and vocational BTEC courses at Key Stage 4. Alternative curricular provision for potentially disaffected students is impacting positively on their attainment, rate of progress and progression opportunities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum. Partnerships with other schools and colleges have enhanced the range of options. Links with external providers and agencies add to the students' curricular opportunities and the good quality of care, support and guidance. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity through pastoral programmes and the broad and balanced curriculum. Effective analysis of the performance of different groups of students is beginning to impact on improving outcomes for students. Safeguarding procedures are robust.

The governing body places a strong emphasis on the school's continued and accelerated improvement in achievement particularly at Key Stage 4. It is a good conduit for the school's links with its community as well as the wider education and business sectors. Members of the governing body are fully involved in the monitoring of the school's work and take part in many school activities.



## 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	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 pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' 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 pupils 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 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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' 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.**



13 January 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Witton Park High School, Blackburn, BB2 6TD**

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and I when we inspected your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit to your school. We would also like to commend you for your good behaviour and your commitment to making the school a harmonious place in which to work. We would particularly like to thank the many of you who spoke with us.

Our inspection found that yours is a satisfactory and improving school. You are making satisfactory progress throughout your time at Witton. Your results are improving but need to accelerate further and particularly in English and mathematics. There is much good teaching in the school. In these lessons, you respond well to the teachers' high expectations. However, there remains too much satisfactory teaching. The teachers and support staff give you good care, guidance and support.

The leaders in your school worked with us to decide on some ways in which your school could be even better. We decided that to achieve this, the school should:

- further increase the percentage of outstanding and good teaching so that you all have the opportunity to engage in consistently challenging learning
- improve examination results at Key Stage 4 and particularly in English and mathematics.

You can help your school to improve further by ensuring everyone focuses on the pursuit of excellence and trying hard in your studies so that you can achieve your full potential in life.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Geraghty  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).