

Calder High School, A Specialist Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107562
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	377603
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2012
Lead inspector	John Coleman HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,368
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Good
Headteacher	Carol Spillane
Date of previous school inspection	5 November 2008
School address	Brier Hey Lane Mytholmroyd Hebden Bridge HX7 5QN
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 43 lessons taught by 40 different teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the local authority and several groups of students. Telephone discussions took place with a small number of parents and a representative of a local college which provides courses for students on roll at Calder High School. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including data showing students' attainment and progress, policies, the minutes of meetings of the governing body, reports from the School Improvement Partner, safeguarding records and students' work. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and questionnaires were scrutinised from a sample of 350 students, 57 staff and from 250 parents and carers.

Information about the school

The Calder High School is a much larger than average-sized secondary school. It is situated in a local authority which operates a policy of selective entry to secondary education. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A lower than average proportion of students speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The school has achieved several nationally recognised awards, including Arts Mark Gold, Safe Mark and the Sports Mark. The school's results meet the current floor standard (the government's expected minimum). Vocational courses are available at a local college.

Since the last inspection, there have been significant staffing changes. The headteacher left midway through one academic year and the school was led by an acting headteacher during 2009/10. The changes to senior staff include a new headteacher who commenced in September 2010 and a new deputy headteacher who took up her post in May 2011. Also, the school has appointed a Strategic Business Development Manager. Currently, there are procedures underway to appoint a new Assistant Headteacher 'Attainment, progress and intervention-Leader Key Stage 5,' and, a new Assistant Headteacher 'Student well-being, behaviour and attendance.'

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	4
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	4
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the behaviour of students.
- Current leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching through the introduction of regular monitoring and rigorous evaluation. School records and local authority reports show that previous inadequate teaching has largely been eradicated. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and the proportion of good and better teaching is improving. As a result, the progress made by students is also improving and is broadly satisfactory. From starting points above those found nationally, students reach above-average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is acceptable. This demonstrates the satisfactory quality of leadership and management.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. As a result of satisfactory teaching, students make broadly satisfactory progress from starting points below those found in sixth forms nationally. There is a suitable range of curriculum courses and options for students.
- In classrooms, students’ behaviour, as seen by inspectors, is generally compliant and attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Questionnaires returned by parents and carers, students and staff all show significant concerns over time regarding low-level disruption in classes and poor behaviour. Discussions with several student groups reveal many significant concerns about students’ behaviour especially in and around the school. Observations by inspectors confirm these concerns and judge there are some inadequate aspects of students’ social and moral development. Consequently, the behaviour of students is judged as inadequate.
- Partnerships with local schools and colleges are developing well and make an effective contribution to the curriculum in particular. Partnerships with parents and the local authority are underdeveloped.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the behaviour of students by:
 - increasing the level of supervision in and around the school
 - improving the management of the premises including strengthening the arrangements for lunchtime by limiting movement for students and ensuring that designated areas are fully utilised
 - ensuring that all students and staff fully understand the school's expectations of students' behaviour
 - ensuring that all staff consistently apply the school's policies for managing students' behaviour
 - improving students' ability to communicate their worries or concerns quickly to staff and increasing their confidence in the staff's responses.

- Improve students' academic progress by:
 - increasing the amount of good and better teaching
 - developing more opportunities for independent learning
 - improving the use of assessment, especially in lessons, to rigorously check on students' understanding
 - increasing the pace of learning and the level of challenge for students
 - improving the impact of marking so that students are clearer about how to improve their work.

- Strengthen the impact of external partnerships on students' learning and behaviour by:
 - enabling greater involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning by creating more opportunities for parents and carers to engage in the life and work of the school
 - requesting the support, expertise and experience of the local authority in regard to the points for improvement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In most lessons, students show suitable interest and enthusiasm in their learning and this makes a sound contribution to their satisfactory progress. The majority of students say they are happy to come to school, learn a lot in lessons and think they develop appropriate skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. In lessons seen by inspectors, most students pay attention and concentrate well. Students' attainment in reading is above average. In the best lessons, when learning is challenging, exciting and interesting, students respond with eagerness and good application. This results in accelerated progress. For example, in a lesson where students were learning to make risotto, their interest was captured by the teacher's very good attention to safety and accuracy when using sharp knives, constant reference was made to levels of attainment and the teacher frequently checked students' progress by using skilfully worded questions. Questionnaire returns from parents and carers show a vast majority who agree that their child is making good progress. School records, external examination results and observations by inspectors show that students make satisfactory but improving progress. Students' progress in the sixth form is

similar to the main school, though levels of attainment are lower due to the entry levels being lower.

Following the last inspection, students' attainment and progress declined as shown by the results of external examinations for Key Stage 4 in 2009 and 2010. In 2011, the results were much improved and evidence from the school's monitoring shows students are on track to achieve more highly in 2012. Overall, attainment has remained above average during the last three years. Most students enter Year 7 with attainment levels which are above average. They make satisfactory and improving rates of progress due to an improving quality of teaching. There is some variation, for example, students make better progress in mathematics than in English. Also, students with low prior attainment and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals make less progress than other groups of students. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to all students. The school's specialism of technology makes an effective contribution to teaching in a range of subjects through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) but students' achievement in design and technology is below average overall.

Quality of teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving. There are several developing areas of strength. The planned curriculum makes an effective contribution to students' learning providing a broad and balanced range of subjects and experiences. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers use ICT very well to illustrate learning and this successfully engages students and focuses their concentration. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students quickly learnt to interpret graphical representations of speed and distance. The teacher expertly guided students' learning as they watched a computer programme showing three swimmers as they swam two lengths of the pool. Alongside the image of the swimmers, students were able to observe the emerging graph depicting both speed and time as it evolved. Planning for lessons is soundly in place and shows clear objectives for learning. There is often good use of appropriate technical vocabulary and teachers have good subject knowledge. Some teachers use demonstration and modelling techniques very well so that students can visualise what they are being told. This was seen in a lesson in which students learnt about symmetry and the teacher gave students the opportunity to show others their understanding by drawing lines of symmetry on the board at the front of the classroom.

Almost half of the questionnaires analysed by the inspection team which were completed by students and their parents and carers indicated that some lessons are disrupted by bad behaviour. Inspectors observed a small minority of lessons like this as well as some inadequate form periods at the start of the day, in which the provision for developing students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is weak. Monitoring evidence presented by the school shows that there was a significant amount of inadequate learning in lessons during the last academic year. Recent monitoring shows this is much improved. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in the effective use of assessment, marking, the pace and challenge of learning and opportunities for students to learn independently are holding back leaders' efforts to move satisfactory teaching to good. The satisfactory lessons seen by inspectors were often characterised by too much 'teacher talk' and instruction and insufficient attention to regularly checking on students' understanding. In several classes, students' written work shows a lack of pride in the standard of presentation.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In and around the main school, not including the sixth form where behaviour is good, several students show significant disregard for the school's behaviour policies. Inspectors overheard frequent use of unacceptable language, mostly at a distance but in deliberate earshot. Students were seen to challenge school staff regarding what is acceptable and what is not. Students spoke to inspectors about the numbers who smoke, usually in unseen outside areas and also offsite at lunchtime. Inspectors smelled smoke on several students. The level of supervision is inadequate for the size and distribution of the school site. There are too many opportunities for students to misbehave while unseen. Students are able to wander too freely at lunchtime. Several students do not manage their own behaviour to an acceptable standard. The questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and parents and carers all show very high percentages expressing concern about students' behaviour. Groups of students who spoke to inspectors highlighted concerns about racist remarks, disruption in some lessons and said that students' views are not taken seriously by staff. Inspectors agree with their concerns. Students say they do not like the new school rules but there is evidence of some early signs of positive impact. Students agree that behaviour overall, especially in lessons, is improving. Inspectors' observations support this view. However, several students show a lack of common understanding of, and commitment to, the school's expectations for behaviour. Staff questionnaires show strong agreement that staff do not all consistently apply these expectations.

The school has suitable arrangements to ensure the safeguarding of students. Questionnaires do not raise the same level of concern about students feeling safe. Indeed, discussions with students confirm this. The school carries out the required checks on staff and keeps an updated single central register of these as required. Staff are trained in the correct procedures for child protection and first aid. Suitable policies are in place for health and safety considerations. Practical lessons, such as technology and science, begin with suitable emphasis on the safety aspects for the lesson.

Leadership and management

The governing body, headteacher and senior leaders have steered the school through a period of significant staff turbulence by providing clear direction. Current leaders have successfully tackled inadequate teaching and previous underperformance in some senior leaders' roles through rigorous monitoring and effective management. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving and students are making increasing progress. The school recognises that more needs to be done but a sound start has been made. This shows the school's capacity to improve further. Senior leaders have introduced a quality assurance framework to improve the school's performance. This is beginning to improve the impact of middle leaders' work. The governing body receives written reports and face-to-face presentations from middle leaders. This ensures that the governing body is well informed about academic progress and students' attainment. Minutes of governing body meetings show suitable levels of challenge to school leaders.

Questionnaires completed by parents and carers and discussions with some parents revealed concerns about the curriculum especially the school's organisation of the timing of external modular examinations, particularly with regard to early entry for GCSE examinations. Inspectors judge that the range of courses and subjects in each key stage,

including the sixth form, is suitably broad and well matched to students' needs. There are many extra-curricular opportunities for students including residential visits, that enrich the curriculum and extend learning. The school has plans to review the options available to students in the light of recent government legislation. Overall, provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is suitable but there are some weaknesses in the moral and social aspects. The behavioural issues noted in this report are evidence of these shortcomings. The curriculum for students' personal and health education is well matched to students' needs. The impact is variable, as seen in the numbers of students who smoke and the large numbers of students seen eating take-away food at lunchtime.

The governing body ensure that arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Leaders' efforts to improve teaching and students' progress also promote equality and have resulted in improvements in the performance of subjects and some groups of students. Nevertheless, students' concerns about racial discrimination show that the school's policies and procedures do not cater fully for all students' needs.

Leaders ensure there is an attractive school website which is kept up to date with curriculum changes, letters of useful information and school policies. A minority of students, and parents and carers, say that leaders do not always respond well to their concerns. Inspectors judge that the school, including the governing body, keeps people informed through regular communication. However, the partnership with parents and carers sometimes lacks a common understanding of how best to support students' learning and personal development. There are few opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in the life and work of the school. For example, there is no parents and carers association and little opportunity is provided for parents and carers to help out in school. Similarly, the school's partnership with the local authority does not maximise the opportunities to draw on this external experience and expertise.

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).

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.



31 January 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Calder High School, A Specialist Technology College, Hebden Bridge, HX7 5QN

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school when we visited you recently. We would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We judged that the overall effectiveness of Calder High School is inadequate. These are the main reasons.

- In your questionnaires you raised high levels of concern about behaviour and inspectors agree you are right to be concerned. Behaviour is judged as inadequate due to some students' poor behaviour in and around the school. For this reason, the school has been given a notice to improve. This means the school will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector in the near future.
- The governing body, headteacher and school leaders are improving the quality of teaching. In turn, this is improving the amount of progress which you make in learning the skills you will need in the future.
- You make satisfactory progress due to satisfactory teaching. You reach standards which are above average in the main school.
- The sixth form is satisfactory and its students make satisfactory progress.

All schools need to develop and improve. We have asked that the behaviour of students is improved. You must all play your part in this by taking full notice of the school's behaviour policy and working hard with the staff to make sure everyone understands what is expected. Also, we have asked that the quality of teaching is further improved so that more lessons are good and result in you making consistently good progress. Finally, we have asked that the partnerships between school and parents and carers, and the local authority, are improved, so that everyone involved in the school can play a full part in making Calder High a better place to study and socialise.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

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