

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112932
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378610
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Knowles

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	860
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeremy Stobart
Headteacher	Simon Grieves
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2007
School address	Long Lane Chapel-en-le-Frith High Peak SK23 0TQ
Telephone number	01298 813118
Fax number	01298 812055
Email address	enquiries@chapel-en-le-frithhigh.derbyshire.sch.uk

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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Knowles	Additional inspector
Keith Brown	Additional inspector
Robin Fugill	Additional inspector
Kathleen Yates	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 34 lessons taught by 31 teachers and two teaching assistants. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership group. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and groups of students from the learning support department and from Years 7, 9 and 11. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, looked at records of students' progress and behaviour, and took account of a range of the school's policies. Inspectors also heard students in Years 7 and 8 read. They considered the responses to inspection questionnaires from 148 students, 61 staff and 440 parents and carers, of whom 148 made additional written comments.

Information about the school

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It draws its students from the town and surrounding rural areas and, increasingly, from further afield. Almost all students come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school includes specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs. It provides 37 places for students with statements of special educational needs. Its 32 current students have a range of needs, including communication difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, severe learning difficulties and autism. This provision is known as the 'learning support department' and also provides support for students with disabilities and those with special educational needs in the main school, some of whom have statements of special educational needs. At present there is an above-average percentage of such students in the school, and the overall percentage of students with statements of special educational needs is high.

The school meets the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It is a specialist mathematics, science and technology college. The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status, the Sports Mark, Arts Mark, Inclusion Quality Mark, and the International Schools, Eco Schools and Investors in People awards. The headteacher took up his appointment in September 2011.

There is a privately run nursery on the site, which is not managed by the governing body, and this is inspected separately. The site also includes a local leisure centre.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. A renewed focus on students’ learning under the leadership of the new headteacher has resulted in improved progress throughout the school. Generally good teaching means students are motivated to learn. The school is not outstanding because variations in teaching within and between subjects mean that students are sometimes not challenged to achieve their potential.
- Students at all levels, including in the learning support department, are currently making good progress, especially in Years 7 to 9. Those in Year 10 and 11 are on target to achieve well. The school’s above-average success in the English Baccalaureate is complemented by high attainment on the few vocational courses undertaken. Progress in mathematics is now good following targeted support.
- The large majority of teaching, including in the learning support department, provides challenging activities which help students learn at a fast pace. Students work well together when given the opportunity, and relationships in classrooms are good. A small minority of teaching does not take enough account of students’ needs and progress is slower in these lessons.
- Students are courteous to each other and adults, and their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They feel safe in school. Students with statements of special educational needs in the learning support department are well integrated, including into some mainstream lessons. Students are fully aware of the school’s anti-bullying stance and noted there is very little bullying.
- The school has a longstanding ethos of ensuring all students feel included. The new headteacher’s focus on increasing progress through improvements in teaching has had rapid success in mathematics. The analysis of assessment data is good for individual students but does not also routinely track the progress of groups of students to check how well all groups are performing.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching more consistent across and within subjects through building on existing good practice and ensuring that all teachers:
 - enable students to take more responsibility for their learning
 - match activities and challenge more precisely to students' needs
 - make greater use of higher-order thinking skills in lessons
 - include comments in marking that tell students their current performance and help them to improve their work.

- Make more use of existing assessment data to analyse the progress made by the full range of groups of students to identify outstanding practice that can be shared among all staff and ensure that no groups underperform.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

In 2011, results at the end of Year 11 rose again after a slight dip in 2010 and were broadly average. This hides some notable successes, such as above-average results in English, high results in modern languages and near-100% results in the small range of vocational and alternative qualifications taken by students. In the English Baccalaureate, the school exceeded national averages in 2011. The school's results in most of its specialist subjects are secure, but the school's performance in mathematics has not been as strong recently. Concerted support for mathematics teaching has resulted in much faster progress this school year, and early GCSE results show improvement.

From average starting points, students make good progress in lessons, a view shared by the very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Students' work since September shows clear progression and they learn at a good pace in many lessons. This good progress is linked to the quality of the challenging activities planned by many teachers, where students become highly involved in their learning. In addition, the school's assessment data show that, in Year 7 to 9, students are making good progress, especially in mathematics. In Years 10 and 11, students are on course to meet or exceed their targets and achieve improved results. Lower-attaining students, too, make good progress through the effective support of teaching assistants and smaller classes. The school's data show that the gap between boys' and girls' attainment in English and mathematics is narrowing.

Students taught mainly in the learning support department make good progress and achieve well. Personalised learning for many of the school's disabled students and those with special educational needs means that their needs are well met. The strong focus in the learning support department on independent learning and on

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supporting access to the full curriculum means that students are motivated and learn effectively. This is reflected in their recorded work, which also shows good progress.

Careful tracking of the progress of individual students means that the school identifies quickly any student at risk of falling behind, and provides appropriate support and intervention that supports better progress. The recently introduced programme to accelerate progress in reading among younger students has been welcomed by them. It effectively provides much greater motivation and a structure in which they can focus on achieving target reading levels.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are very positive about teaching at the school, and this view was reflected in what was seen in classrooms. Typically, teachers have high expectations, set clear learning objectives and are enthusiastic about their subjects. Many lessons contain challenging activities, with variation to meet individual needs, that engage students well. Students learned particularly well when the teacher had planned well-paced paired or group activities that promoted their communication skills and social development. In a history lesson, for example, students in Year 8 pieced together how and why two children might have gone missing from work in the 1820s, sharing their theories with the whole class. In doing so they gained many insights into children's working conditions at that time. Students' work in many subjects showed a consistent pattern of challenge and good progress since the beginning of the school year. In a small minority of lessons, students listened for long periods to their teachers and tackled activities that did not stretch them intellectually or develop higher-order skills such as analysis or problem solving. Students' spiritual, moral and cultural development is not as well promoted as their social development.

Across the school, students know their targets and readily engage in discussions about the criteria used for awarding levels and grades. In an information and communication technology lesson, for example, students in Year 11 worked cooperatively using examination criteria to identify how they should improve their GCSE grade, taking considerable responsibility for their own learning. Marking of students' work is generally secure but also showed variation. In many cases it indicated clearly how well students were doing and how they could improve their work but one or both of these elements were missing in a minority.

Teaching of students in specialist classes in the learning support department showed similar variation to that found in the rest of the school. Their learning was highly individualised to match their specific needs. In mainstream classes, disabled students and those who have special educational needs were well supported by teaching assistants, with many making good progress in lessons. The curriculum, with its focus on traditional subjects, provides some alternative pathways for students.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students feel safe at school and this is reflected in the views of parents and carers.

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Induction into Year 7, and into the learning support department in all years, helps students settle in well and they quickly gain confidence as learners. Students with statements of special educational needs are provided with strong personalised support so that they feel confident around the school and in lessons. Students are consistently courteous around the school, even when corridors become congested at change of lessons. In lessons, their behaviour is good or outstanding when they are engaged in challenging and interesting activities. Even when they listen to a teacher for long periods it is good, with little restlessness. Students felt that few lessons are disrupted by off-task behaviour, although some students in Year 9 felt that incidents occur more than occasionally. Behaviour in lessons during the inspection and students' attitudes to learning were good. A small minority of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire commented on disruption to learning but evidence from data, students and observations indicated that it is not widespread.

Behaviour is carefully monitored by senior staff to ensure support and intervention strategies are put in place. For example, play and creative arts therapy has enabled some students with challenging behaviour to succeed in mainstream classes. The rate of exclusion is below average, attendance is above average and is improving, and punctuality to school and to lessons is good.

The school has taken a strong line on bullying. An anti-bullying week, awareness raising of different types of bullying, and a programme of support on internet safety mean students have a good understanding of how to stay safe and who to turn to if they need support. Students indicated that little bullying took place. Disabled students and those with special educational needs taught mainly in the learning support department also felt that bullying was minimal and any that did occur was swiftly dealt with. Records show few reported behavioural or racist incidents in the school and support students' views. A few parents and carers commented on cases where bullying had not been resolved, but others noted cases where it had.

Leadership and management

The school has had a long period of stable and successful leadership with an ethos of collaborative working among staff, purposeful relationships with students and an attractive and welcoming learning environment. The new headteacher has maintained all these elements and, in the short time since his appointment, has identified the need for a much stronger additional focus on learning and students' progress. Senior leaders have tackled underperformance in mathematics, design and technology, and more recently in geography. Deploying the school's advanced skills teachers more effectively, they have already brought about significant gains in students' progress in mathematics throughout the school and in the quality of teaching in design and technology. Alongside this, staff have established a specification for good teaching and learning, which is now used in monitoring and in peer-to-peer learning walks. The school has good capacity to improve further.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs and aptitudes of students well. Academic courses in Years 10 and 11 are supplemented by a small but

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appropriate range of vocational courses. The school's specialist subjects are well represented. The curriculum promotes students' spiritual, moral and cultural development satisfactorily, and their social development well. The school tackles all forms of discrimination well and, through an inclusive approach, promotes equality effectively.

The school's good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning involve subject leaders effectively in joint observations. Senior leaders have a very clear focus on improvement, an accurate understanding of the quality of what they see in lessons, and time with departments to drive improvement and take or support action. Recent self-evaluation is accurate and has led to a well-focused school improvement plan. The school does not yet have a systematic analysis of students' termly progress to use regularly during the year to provide clear evidence of which groups of students are at risk of falling behind or to identify where outstanding practice can be shared. The school's assessment data are used effectively, however, to identify where individual students need support. The governing body challenges the school well and holds subject leaders to account for students' performance. Governors have a good understanding of the school's results. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements, including for safeguarding students and for health and safety, are in place.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



27 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Chapel-en-le-Frith High School, High Peak, SK23 0TQ

Thank you for the welcome you gave members of the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We valued your contribution to the inspection, whether it was through discussions in classes, around the school, in small groups or while hearing some of you read. It was good to see you relax as the inspection went on, while always remaining courteous and well behaved.

We came to the conclusion that you go to a good school, a view I know you share. You achieve well and your progress is improving, thanks to your hard work and some actions taken by the school's senior leaders to improve teaching and learning, which are also good. There is still room for further improvement, however, and we have asked your headteacher to make sure teaching is consistently as good as it can be by all teachers doing what most do now and:

- helping you take more responsibility for your learning
- making sure the work is neither too hard nor too easy
- getting you to think more deeply in some lessons
- telling you in their marking how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.

The headteacher and other leaders do their jobs well. The school's governing body and the senior leaders make sure the staff are working well, too, and that all the requirements for the school are in place. The staff track your individual progress well, but we asked the school to analyse the average progress in different subjects, classes, and other groups of students, to keep a check on how well they are doing compared with other groups. For your part you can support the school's improvement by continuing to attend regularly, behave well, and do your best. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Knowles
Lead inspector

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