

# Cockburn School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108065
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	356298
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Harrison

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>	1076
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Westwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Gurney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Parkside Gipsy Lane, Leeds West Yorkshire LS11 5TT
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 3368500
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2761853
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 43 lessons and 43 teachers. Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, groups of students from four year groups, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at information about students' progress, the school development plan and the school's records of lesson observations. They analysed the findings from 242 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making progress as well as other students and the reasons for any differences in progress.
- How well teachers use assessment information to plan and provide work which matches the needs of all students in the group.
- The extent to which the school's specialist status has been used to best effect in raising attainment, extending students' experience and moving the school forward.

## Information about the school

Cockburn is larger-than-the-average secondary school and serves the Beeston and Middleton areas of south Leeds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average. Most students come from a White British background, with a small number from a wide range of other groups. The number of students who speak English as an additional language reflects the situation nationally. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. The current headteacher took up the permanent post in September 2010 after being acting headteacher for two years. The school has held specialist status in the arts since 2005. It holds a number of awards including Artsmark Gold.

**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

This is a good school. It has improved significantly over the last two years, despite the temporary arrangements for the school's leadership and the additional challenge of the school undergoing a major re-build and being totally refurbished. The school now has a permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher and other leadership roles have been streamlined to meet the school's needs. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses and self-evaluation is broadly accurate. It is therefore well placed to make the further improvements outlined in its carefully constructed development plan.

The school's specialist status in the arts is a major strength and its contribution has been recognised in the Artsmark Gold award. The specialist subjects of art, music, dance and drama make a big contribution to students' overall attainment. In addition, they provide a huge source of interest and excitement and help to motivate students and encourage them to enjoy their time in school. Students speak enthusiastically of the forthcoming production of *West Side Story* in which so many of them are involved.

Students are well known as individuals and the care, support and guidance provided for them is good. The school works closely in partnership with other agencies to care for those students who are vulnerable or likely to become disaffected. Arrangements for safeguarding are good so that students feel safe in school. Students' attendance continues to improve and is now close to the national average. Behaviour is good around the school and makes a positive contribution to learning in a large majority of lessons.

Students' progress is good and improving strongly but there are some variations between different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in lessons and make progress that matches that of others in their class. However, students of higher ability, both boys and girls in both key stages, make outstanding progress while the progress of lower-ability students although good, is less impressive. In lower attaining groups, the good progress indicated by test and examination results is occasionally not fully reflected in students' learning in lessons. Although the quality of teaching is good overall, teachers are not always successful in maintaining the interest and concentration of lower-ability students. Other factors, in addition to the teaching in lessons, make a strong contribution to students' longer-term progress. A good curriculum, including carefully chosen courses, gives students a wide range of opportunities to gain qualifications. Students and their parents value the many revision classes that prepare students effectively for examinations.

As a result of their good progress, some aspects of students' attainment in some subjects, particularly in the various BTEC courses, is above average by the time they leave the school. Nevertheless, attainment is low overall, because examination results in English and mathematics are significantly below average. As these subjects are widely seen as important in gaining employment, students' preparation for their future working lives is

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satisfactory, despite some good vocational opportunities. The good progress that students make overall, together with the outstanding progress of higher-ability students and a very strong trend of improvement in progress, indicates that students' achievement is good.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - extending the work to improve students' literacy skills across the curriculum;
  - increasing the links with primary schools in order to help raise attainment in literacy and numeracy when students arrive in Year 7.
- Improve the progress made by lower-attaining students so that it matches that of higher attainers by:
  - ensuring that teachers expect more from lower attainers and always engage them fully in their learning
  - using the good practice from the school's specialist subjects, where lower attaining students are particularly successful, in order to improve teaching in other subjects.

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

**2**

The progress that students make in their lessons and in their written work is generally good. The best learning is to be seen in lessons where teaching is particularly engaging and students are actively involved. For example, in a religious education lesson for Year 8, students posted questions in the 'ask it basket' and thoroughly enjoyed finding out the answers as they explored aspects of Sikhism. In a Year 7 dance lesson, students were fully engaged in assessing their performance, and that of others, in order to improve the quality of their characterisation. Such lessons are more common for higher-ability students. A few teachers find it more difficult to motivate students who are less able, often because they do not expect enough of these students and set work that is too easy. Nevertheless, teachers in some subjects, particularly the specialist subjects of art, music, dance and drama, are successful in ensuring that students of all abilities enjoy their learning, maintain concentration and make good progress.

Students' achievement is good and they enjoy their time in school. They arrive in Year 7 with overall attainment that is well below the national average. Many have weak literacy skills and this often remains a stumbling block throughout their time in school. The school is aware that it is not yet making best use of links with its primary partners to raise students' standards of literacy and numeracy on entry to Year 7. Nevertheless, students make good progress and, at the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A\* to C is above the national average. For higher attainers, the proportion who achieve three or more grades A and A\* at GCSE is well-above average. However, the number of students gaining five or more grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is below average, so attainment remains low overall.

Assemblies make an important contribution to students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but tutor time is not used consistently well to broaden students' experience and encourage reflection. Students speak highly of the advice they are given on how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. A range of healthy options is available in the dining

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room at lunchtime and an increasing minority of students take up those options. However, the packed lunches eaten by many students often reflect their preferences rather than their understanding of healthy eating. Students say how much they enjoy the wide range of sporting activities, both within and beyond the curriculum, and participation rates are good. The school council is highly valued by students who particularly appreciate its successful request for lockers in the refurbished school building. Students have good opportunities to contribute to the school community. They support younger students, act as 'bullying ambassadors', help in the equipment shop and raise money for a range of charities.

*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: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and usually make good use of assessment information to match the work to the needs of students in the class. They take care to ensure that students know what they are required to learn and what is expected from students of different abilities. In the more successful lessons, students move swiftly into activities which are demanding and require them to think hard and maintain concentration. Teachers generally use good, carefully-targeted questioning to move learning forward. They encourage students to assess their own and each other's work, giving them a good understanding of how the work might be improved. This is reinforced by good spoken feedback and helpful marking of students' written work. In less successful

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lessons, teachers sometimes pay too much attention to the techniques they feel they should adopt and not enough to making sure that students make the best possible progress in the lesson. In these circumstances, students become restless, the pace of learning slows and students make satisfactory, rather than good progress.

The school's curriculum meets the needs of all students and is successful in enabling them to make good progress. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is a particular strength, with a wide range of GCSE and BTEC courses and a carefully personalised curriculum for students who are in danger of becoming disaffected. However, the school is not yet paying enough attention to developing students' basic skills, particularly in literacy, across all subjects.

The school's emphasis on providing good care and support for all students makes a strong contribution to both their personal development and the progress that they make. The good strategies to increase attendance have led to a significant improvement and a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. Although much of the advice provided for students is of good quality, there is insufficient guidance provided on future opportunities because the number of students who do not move on from Year 11 into education, employment or training is above average.

*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>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher provide strong and effective leadership for the school. All staff share the aim of 'transformation to excellence' which drives the school forward. Leaders have identified where weaknesses exist in particular subjects and re-structured the senior and middle leadership teams in order to overcome those problems. These improvements have only been in place for a few months and it is too early for them to be fully effective in improving the consistency of students' progress across the subject areas. Although most aspects of self-evaluation are accurate and leaders are successful in ensuring good teaching overall, the school's judgements on the quality of teaching in individual lessons are sometimes too positive. This is the result of placing too much emphasis on what teachers do rather than on how well students learn. The school is not making maximum use of the good practice in teaching in the specialist subjects of art, music, dance and drama to improve teaching across the curriculum. The governing body is well informed and challenging, making a good contribution to the school's improvement.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding are good but the systems are not routinely informed by students' and parents' and carers' views. The school takes care to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to achieve. The school deals well with any incidents

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of discrimination. For example, a 'racial harmony group' was introduced to create a better understanding between groups of girls, some of whom were finding it difficult to appreciate the others' values and points of view. The school itself is a cohesive community in which students get on well together. Links with the local community are strong, particularly in relation to the school's specialism in the arts. However, links with different communities, in this country and overseas, are less well established.

*These are the grades for 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>2</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>2</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

About a fifth of parents and carers returned the questionnaires and several made comments giving their views of the school. Parents and carers are generally positive about the school. They particularly appreciate the improvement in the school over the last two years and refer to staff, 'going the extra mile' in order to support students with extra help and revision classes. Inspection findings support the strengths identified by parents. The additional support given outside lessons makes an important contribution to students' progress. A few parents said that the school had not dealt effectively with particular incidents of bullying. Students are confident that any bullying is now quickly sorted out by the school and inspection evidence confirms students' views.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cockburn 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 242 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,076 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	107	44	118	49	15	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	124	51	111	46	4	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	116	48	111	46	10	4	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	112	46	112	46	8	3	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	114	47	115	48	6	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	92	38	124	51	17	7	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	34	140	58	16	7	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)	96	40	122	50	10	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	110	45	116	48	10	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	110	45	110	45	12	5	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	73	30	135	56	13	5	5	2
The school is led and managed effectively	113	47	114	47	7	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	123	51	106	44	7	3	4	2

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



17 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Cockburn, Leeds LS11 5TT**

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you about our findings. First of all, I would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about how you feel about the school. As a result of the inspection, I judged yours to be a good school where you make good progress overall. You told us that the school has improved significantly in the last two years and inspection evidence supports your opinion. The school makes good arrangements for safeguarding so that you feel safe in school. I was particularly impressed by the way the school has used its specialist status in the arts to give you exciting and interesting opportunities and to enable you to get better examination results.

However, even in a good school there are some things that could be improved. Although you make good progress from when you arrive in Year 7, the examination results in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11 are low compared with the national average. Also, although those of you who find learning more difficult make good progress, it does not match the outstanding progress of the more-able students. I have asked teachers to make the work for the intermediate and foundation flightpaths more interesting and challenging so that students in those groups can make the best possible progress. I hope that you will play your part and make an extra effort in those lessons.

I know that many of you are involved in the forthcoming production of West Side Story and that you are really enjoying rehearsals. I hope it all goes smoothly.

I wish you and the school all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Harrison  
Lead inspector

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