

Colne Park High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119719
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358613
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	916
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beverley Catlow
Headteacher	Dr Paul Parkin
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 39 lessons taught by 37 teachers and held meetings with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, scrutinised students' books and looked at documentation, including progress tracking systems, the school's development plan and 340 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- The extent of improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- How well the curriculum meets the needs of different groups of students.
- The accuracy of the school's view about its strengths and areas for development.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school which draws its students from the town of Colne and its surrounding villages. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average, although the overall number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also average, although the majority of students come from wards with high levels of deprivation. There are very few students from an ethnic background other than White British. The school has specialist status in mathematics and computing. Colne Park High School is an oversubscribed school.

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 is characterised by a drive to raise aspirations and bring out the best in each student. Since the last inspection effective action has taken place to improve outcomes for students. These outcomes are now good. Examination results at the end of Year 11 are above the national average and students are making good progress in the majority of lessons. Attendance is average and the behaviour of the majority of students is good. They enjoy coming to school and take part in a wide range of activities within school and the local community. Their awareness of the diversity of other cultures is limited.

The majority of lessons are good. Staff are particularly skilful at getting students to acquire the skills and knowledge they need to do well in external examinations. Good assessment of students' work means they are clear about what they need to do to bring about further improvement and reach higher grades. In a minority of lessons, there is a lack of excitement in the way the subject is delivered or an over-dependence on input from the teacher. Changes to the curriculum since the last inspection have made it very flexible to meet the needs of individual students and this plays a significant part in improving examination results. Changes to strengthen the personal development aspects of the curriculum are more recent. Both academic and pastoral support are good. Careful tracking of the progress of students means additional support is put in place to address potential underachievement quickly. Additional resources have been allocated to pastoral support this year to increase targeted work, for example, to continue to improve attendance.

Leadership and management are good. Staff are very supportive of the changes taking place in the school to drive up standards. An important change since the last inspection is the effective training that takes place to improve the skills of the middle leadership team. Good use of data has contributed well to the school's successful strategies to narrow the achievement gap between different groups of students. Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very positive about the school. Self-evaluation is honest and rigorous. This, and the school's proven track record in driving up standards in recent years, leads inspectors to conclude there is good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure strategies to improve teaching focus on stimulating interest and developing students' ability to think for themselves.
- Ensure that recent changes to the personal development curriculum are successful at helping students develop a better understanding of a wider range of cultures.

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- Monitor carefully the impact of strategies to improve attendance to ensure recent improvements are sustained.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The majority of students enjoy coming to school, they attend regularly and behave well in lessons and around the school. The proportion of students who regularly miss lessons is reducing and attendance is broadly average. In lessons, students show a willingness to learn and an increasing confidence that they can succeed. They have a clear understanding of the targets they are striving to reach and work hard to improve. They feel safe in the school and most students are respectful of each other and polite to visitors. They participate well in activities outside lessons and contribute to bringing about improvements in the school. They enjoy taking positions of responsibility on the school council and as peer mentors and make their views known on a range of issues via an electronic forum. Their views are influencing decisions about the curriculum and resources and, more recently, what helps them to learn most effectively. They raise money for charity and some take part in international links and an Amnesty International group, but overall their understanding of communities outside of the local area is limited. They have a satisfactory understanding of healthy lifestyles and of the world of work.

The prior attainment of students on entry to the school is slightly below average. Students make good progress in the majority of lessons and reach a higher than average level of attainment by the end of Year 11. Examination results are improving. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was above the national average in 2009. Unvalidated data for 2010 shows further improvement and the results in modular tests and early entry for examinations indicate that the current Year 11 are on track to achieve well. The school is successfully narrowing the gap in achievement between different groups of students. The progress made by students with special educational needs is good.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

¹ 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?

Most lessons are successful at ensuring students have a good understanding of the topic being covered. Many lessons stimulate students' interest and enable them to participate well through the effective use of questions and group work. Teachers set high expectations and give students very clear guidance on what they are aiming to achieve. Students' work is assessed well in lessons to check their learning before moving on, and teachers are very skilful at helping students to see how they can improve their work to reach higher grades. As a result, they make good progress. However, a minority of lessons, although satisfactory, do not capture students' interest or develop their thinking skills sufficiently. In these lessons, learning objectives are sometimes too narrow, they do not allow students to explore the subject in enough depth or relate learning sufficiently to the world outside the classroom. These lessons do not meet the full range of learning needs in the class.

The curriculum provides a good level of flexibility to meet individual needs and this is a significant contributory factor in motivating learners to do well. From Year 9 students have the opportunity to start specialising in the courses that interest them most. The Key Stage 4 curriculum benefits from a range of vocational options, such as engineering, which is delivered in partnership with a local college. Students are entered for examinations when they are deemed ready and early success helps to build their self-esteem. Careful thought goes into curriculum planning and setting arrangements to meet the needs of different

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groups. These include nurture groups for vulnerable students and additional provision for the most able, which has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. Year 9 students continue to receive a broad education through an innovative carousel approach which allows them to take short courses in subjects they are not studying in depth. The curriculum in Years 7 and 8 focuses well on developing literacy, numeracy and study skills. In 2009 the school introduced the 'SPaCE' curriculum to focus on moral, social, cultural and spiritual aspects of education and this is beginning to bring about improvements in these areas.

Well-organised arrangements for care, guidance and support ensure the well-being of students and successfully support their learning. Parents are very positive about the transition arrangements that help new students settle quickly into the school. Staff know students well and there is a significant amount of targeted work to offer extra support to vulnerable young people and those at risk of underachieving. This work benefits from very good links with external agencies. The number of students excluded from school has dropped significantly, partly as a result of the introduction of a successful inclusion unit within the school. Increased resources for pastoral support this year are further strengthening the system, including the work to increase rates of attendance. Students receive very effective help to make choices with examination options in Year 9, and different routes when they leave school. As a result of efforts to support more vulnerable students, the number of students not in education, employment or training after leaving school has reduced significantly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have been successful in developing a culture of high aspirations, which is shared across the school. Improvements are brought about as a result of accurate knowledge of the performance of different groups in the school and effective staff development to address issues. Senior and middle managers use data well to track the performance of individual students in each subject, which allows them to put in place interventions quickly where they identify any potential underachievement.

Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching, and extensive staff development, have increased the proportion of lessons that are good or better since the last inspection, and there is a clear understanding of priorities to bring about further improvement. Partnership working is used effectively in developing the curriculum and support services, although links with employers are not as well developed as some of the other partnerships. The school's specialist subjects contribute well to partnership working, including the joint

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delivery of courses with other schools. They increasingly contribute to improvements in the school, such as the mathematics department's input to tracking student progress, and the wider use of information and communication technology to enhance the engagement with students and parents or carers.

Governors know the school well and monitor carefully its progress towards challenging targets. They are clear about their statutory responsibilities, including the school's safeguarding procedures, which are good. The school is working hard to develop its engagement with parents and carers. It assessed this aspect of its work as satisfactory but inspectors judged it to be good. There is effective action to promote equality of opportunity, notably in the reduction in the gap between the achievement of different groups, and students understand that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly. Effective work takes place to promote a harmonious culture within the school and with the local community but work with the wider community nationally and internationally is more limited.

A particular strength of the school is the rigour and honesty of its self-evaluation. It identifies areas for further development as clearly as the strengths of the school, and has well-thought-through plans to bring about further improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire are very positive about the school. They feel that their child is safe and making good progress, and that the school is led and managed well. A small number would welcome more information about their child's progress and how to support their learning, or feel less positively about the way behaviour is dealt with at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Colne Park High School 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 340 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 916 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	28	225	66	15	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	110	32	220	65	7	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	94	28	199	59	42	12	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	93	27	219	64	21	6	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	83	24	244	72	6	2	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	18	234	69	33	10	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	15	234	69	37	11	5	1
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)	77	23	227	67	17	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	22	239	70	18	5	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	85	25	204	60	34	10	5	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	68	20	216	64	35	10	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	90	26	227	67	10	3	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	121	36	199	59	10	3	1	0

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



29 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Colne Park High School, Colne, BB8 7DP

As you know, we recently inspected your school and I am writing to tell you about our findings. Thank you for helping us to find our way around and for telling us your views about the school.

We agree with you that Colne Park has improved in recent years and is a good school. We are pleased that most of you behave well, attend regularly and are keen to learn. However, a small minority of students do not think behaviour is good and we saw this is true in a few cases. We think you are making good progress in most lessons and congratulations on the significant improvement in examination results you have achieved in recent years. You are developing a good range of skills to help you when you leave school and we were impressed by your participation in a wide range of activities outside lessons. We agree that the curriculum provides a good range of courses for you and that you receive helpful support and advice to enable you to succeed. We would like you to get more opportunities to learn about people from other cultures.

We think the school is on track to continue to improve and, in particular, we have asked the headteacher to ensure: that in all lessons you are encouraged to develop your interest in the subject and the ability to think for yourselves; that you get more opportunities to learn about people from other cultures; and that attendance levels continue to improve.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Sue Harrison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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