

Falinge Park High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105837
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	355852
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin 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	1180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Glynis Foster
Headteacher	Mr Robin Lonsdale
Date of previous school inspection	9 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty eight lessons taught by 38 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff, groups of students, governors and the school-based police officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's improvement plan, attainment data, and safeguarding procedures. The responses in 281 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 79 completed by staff and 87 from students, were considered.

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

- The quality of the learning and progress of groups of students including those who speak English as an additional language.
- Rates of attendance and persistent absence.
- The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and the rigour with which this is used to drive further improvement.

Information about the school

Falinge Park is a larger-than-average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is about twice the national average. Approximately one third of students are White British with almost two thirds coming from Asian backgrounds, mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is very high compared with the national average. Forty three languages are spoken in the school. Twenty eight students are refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a little above average. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. More students than is usual join and leave the school other than at the expected times. The school has specialist status for performing arts and has been recognised as an Investor in People. It has gained the International School award as well as Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark Gold and the Healthy Schools status.

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 where students rise to the high expectations of the headteacher and staff. They apply themselves diligently to learning and their behaviour is outstanding. 'Inclusion' is the watchword in this highly cohesive community where the extent to which students say they feel safe is outstanding. This is because all students are known as individuals, and the outstanding care, guidance and support provided to meet their very wide-ranging needs are individually tailored. The impact of this is evident in the marked rise in attendance to national average last year and the fall in the number of students who are persistently absent. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students embrace fully the richness and diversity of cultures within the school. The good curriculum supports this well, notably through the extensive range of opportunities offered as part of the school's specialism. These form a significant, but not exclusive, part of the school's outreach to its local community, and well beyond, that leads to the outstanding promotion of community cohesion.

Overall, students achieve well and their attainment is broadly average. This has risen from below average at the time of the previous inspection. There is some unevenness in the performance of groups of students that the school is tackling assiduously and with some success. Systematic tracking of students' progress is contributing well to this, although analysis of assessment information is not fully refined. Students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn well and they make good progress in lessons. Students who speak English as an additional language benefit from very well targeted support for their learning. Overall, teaching and the use of assessment are good; there are some notable strengths, particularly in the school's specialist subjects. Elsewhere there is some variation in the effectiveness with which assessment information is used to plan lessons to meet the full span of students' capabilities.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads from the front, articulating clearly the school's high expectations and vision for improvement. Since the previous inspection, the rigour of systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance has increased: the school's self-evaluation is realistic. However, the impact of initiatives is not always analysed in sufficient detail to provide precise direction for strategic planning. Governance is satisfactory. Improvements have been made to the ways in which governors are kept informed about the school's performance. The school's good capacity to improve is evident in the successful way the issues raised at the previous inspection have been addressed and the rise in students' attainment and attendance. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by:

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- using assessment information more precisely to match work to the full range of students' capabilities
- analysing the impact of initiatives to ensure that strategic planning focuses more sharply on the specific improvements needed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overall, students' achievement is good. From below average starting points when they join in Year 7, students make good progress so that their attainment overall is average by the end of Year 11. Attainment rose markedly in 2009 when the school reached the national average on a number of key measures. This improvement has been sustained in 2010, although some variability between subjects remains with, for instance, weaker performance in science. Strong performance in a number of qualifications linked to the school's specialism contributes well to students' achievement. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers, in part because they receive good support in class. The school's data indicate that individually tailored support for students at varying stages of learning English as an additional language is accelerating their progress.

The school has established a climate in which learning flourishes. Students' outstanding behaviour makes a significant contribution to this. Students display positive attitudes to learning, listening well both to their teachers and classmates. They follow instructions promptly, collaborate well on tasks, and take pride in their work. However, at times students have a passive approach to their learning, relying too heavily on adult direction.

Students have a good grasp of the choices that contribute to a safe and healthy lifestyle. They value the advice available to them in school on such matters. Levels of participation in the very wide range of sports and performance-related activities are high. Students make a good contribution to the community through, for instance, their work as learning champions and peer mediators. Students say that there is little bullying and when it occurs either peer mediators or staff deal with it quickly and effectively. Students' preparation for the next stage of their education and the world of work is satisfactory. Although students' personal development makes a strong contribution to this, their basic skills and rate of attendance are broadly average.

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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	3
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

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?

Overall, teaching is good. It is underpinned by teachers' strong subject knowledge and consistent planning. In the best lessons students are fully engaged by challenging tasks that develop their skills and understanding at a rapid pace. Assessment information is used effectively to plan a range of activities that are well matched to students' abilities and the demands of the curriculum. Targeted questioning develops students' understanding and unearths misconceptions. Helpful marking encourages dialogue and identifies how students can improve their work. Teaching is not as effective where full account is not taken of the assessment information available to plan work that meets the needs of all the students, whatever their capabilities.

The curriculum is good. The innovative approach to developing skills, which is a key element of the Year 7 curriculum, is smoothing transition and improving students' progress. At Key Stage 4 students can select from a wide range of courses and qualifications: the school works hard, and in the main successfully, to ensure that all can follow their preferred courses. The specialism makes a significant contribution to the curriculum by offering a wide range of accredited courses across a number of related areas, such as arts photography. These have been selected carefully to enhance the achievement of various groups of students such as Asian heritage boys. There is an extensive enrichment programme which contributes well to students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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The care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. The focus on meeting students' needs and overcoming their barriers to learning is deeply embedded in the school's ethos and relentless when necessary. Early identification of students' needs is key and facilitated through the good links with partner primary schools and robust arrangements for transition. Students are very well prepared for the decisions they need to make at each stage as they move through school. As a consequence, a very high proportion goes on to education, training or employment when they leave school.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher successfully communicates the ambition of the school with determination and vigour so that it is shared by students, staff and governors. This is evident in the sense of common purpose that pervades the school's work. Since the previous inspection the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders have been clarified so that staff are held accountable for the performance of students. The school has more information about its performance as a consequence of developing a consistent, robust approach to tracking students' progress and monitoring the quality of provision. However, this information is not always used systematically to evaluate the impact of initiatives or in strategic planning.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body makes highly effective use of the expertise of governors, for example, when holding meetings with students regarding their conduct. Safeguarding procedures are good. The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. Opportunities for students to contribute to their local community are legion and mutually beneficial exchanges with schools in contrasting communities expand students' perspectives on life in this country. Recent recognition as an International School acknowledges the school's links farther afield. The school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination well: racist incidents are few.

The school works hard to build and maintain good communication with parents and carers, particularly where students have additional needs or are experiencing difficulties. Links with parents and carers are promoted well, for example, through the school's community outreach workers. A wide range of partnerships, such as those with local schools and colleges, extend curriculum opportunities. These draw well on the expertise available beyond the school, especially to meet the needs of students whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

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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	3
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers say that their child enjoys school and are confident that the school keeps their child safe. A very small minority do not feel that the school does enough to help them support their child's learning. In addition to courses for parents, inspectors found that the school has recently established a feature on its virtual learning environment that allows parents to keep track of their child's learning, homework, behaviour and attendance. A few parents are concerned that the school does not do enough to promote healthy lifestyles. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has a wide range of provision which contributes well to students' understanding of, and opportunities for, healthy choices and activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Falinge 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 281 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	36	168	60	10	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	124	44	148	53	7	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	92	33	173	62	8	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	81	29	179	64	11	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	103	37	167	59	5	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	25	171	61	33	12	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	24	182	65	25	9	1	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)	93	33	165	59	12	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	29	182	65	11	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	125	44	138	49	10	4	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	77	27	153	54	33	12	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	118	42	152	54	4	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	136	48	136	48	4	1	0	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.



8 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Falinge Park High School, Rochdale OL12 6LD

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We judged the school to be good overall and outstanding in some areas of its work. We were impressed by the harmonious atmosphere and the way you value one another's cultures and backgrounds. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Your participation in the very wide range of activities and community links which form part of the school's specialist work make a significant contribution to this.

Mutual respect was evident in your outstanding behaviour and the polite, courteous way you treat others as you move around what is a very congested building. You told us you feel very safe in school. Those of you who are peer mediators make a positive contribution to this through helping to settle any disputes that arise. We found that the care, support and guidance provided by staff are outstanding. They go to great lengths to ensure that each of you gets exactly the right support when you need it.

Teaching is good and you make good progress in lessons. By the end of Year 11 you reach standards that are broadly average. We have asked the headteacher and staff to focus on two things to help raise your attainment. These are:

- making sure the work set in lessons builds precisely on what you already know, understand and can do to help each of you learn as quickly as possible
- analysing carefully what helps you learn quickly and using this as the basis for making improvements.

You can contribute to improving the school further by continuing to behave well and working hard. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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