

Carshalton High School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102999
Local Authority	Sutton
Inspection number	355299
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Alan Taylor-Bennett

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1244
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Harding
Headteacher	Vivien Jones
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	West Street Carshalton Sutton SM5 2QX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 44 lessons and the work of 44 teachers. In addition, meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, and staff. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's development plans, its self-review, analyses of the attainment and progress of its students, records of lesson observations, and policies. Inspectors took account of the responses to staff and student questionnaires and the 178 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the impact of students' contributions to their school on the quality of their education and for them?
- How effectively does the curriculum at Key Stage 3 enable students to make good or better progress in Years 7 and 8, and prepare them to achieve well at Key Stage 4 and beyond?
- How effective is the school's drive to use good assessment strategies in improving the quality of teaching across the school, and how consistent is the impact?

Information about the school

Carshalton High School for Girls is a larger than average non-selective school in a local authority in which there is selection by ability. It is a specialist Humanities and Arts college and has associate training school designation. Its students are drawn from a wide catchment area and there is a higher than average proportion from minority ethnic groups. The number of students known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average, as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school holds the Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and International Schools awards.

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

- Carshalton High School for Girls is a good and strongly improving school.
- The leadership provided by the headteacher and her senior team is outstanding and the quality of leadership across the school is good overall.
- Despite the presence of selective schools in the area, the attainment of students is broadly in line with national averages, having improved significantly over recent years. The progress that students make over their time at the school is good and is also improving.
- This strong trend of improvement in achievement is a direct result of the good leadership throughout the school, which is strongly focused on obtaining the best outcomes for all students.
- The sixth form is good. There is a clear accent on academic achievement and staff provide excellent care, guidance and support for students. Sixth formers speak very highly of their experiences in Years 12 and 13 and those that stay on from Year 11 are glad they did so.
- Teaching in the school is consistently good. There is good quality information about students' achievements available to teachers, and they use it very well to inform their planning and teaching strategies.
- The quality of care, guidance and support for students is excellent. Staff know every student well and use the very good care systems established to respond quickly and effectively to individual needs.
- The curriculum meets the needs of students very well. There is a wide range of courses offered at Key Stage 4 that interest and motivate students, and support their ambitions. Provision in Key Stage 3 is effective but does not focus clearly on responding to patterns of weakness in certain skill areas; neither is there a strongly coordinated approach to developing literacy and numeracy skills across all subjects.
- Students make valuable contributions to the work of the school, including generating the ideas that led to the introduction and development of the house system. Many take on responsibilities in the school and carry them out diligently and thoughtfully. This contributes to their personal development strongly. This spirit of giving and contributing is evident in the school's work with the community also, especially in the many community links established through the school's specialism in arts and humanities.
- The school has a good capacity to sustain further improvement. Very high quality development planning and leadership have driven up standards over the last few years, but there is no complacency. There is also a good understanding by senior

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leaders of the need to adopt different approaches to achieve even higher standards in the future.

- The school prioritises good communication with parents and carers and provides good quality feedback about their children's achievements. It also regularly seeks their views about the work of the school. Despite this, there is a small but significant minority who do not feel that the school helps them to support their child's learning at home, or involves them in the work of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the curriculum in Key Stage 3 to be more responsive to the needs of students when they enter the school by:
 - providing systematic and effective support for any shortfall in skills, knowledge or understanding in key areas for groups of students, improving their confidence and resilience over Years 7 and 8 and reducing the need for catch-up programmes higher up in the school
 - implementing an integrated approach to numeracy and literacy skill development across all subject areas.
- Enable parents and carers to feel more secure about their role in supporting their children's learning by:
 - developing a wider range of strategies for securing their active participation in the work of the school
 - finding ways of actively involving parents and carers in supporting learning at home and, where appropriate, in school
 - making use of governors' expertise and influence.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The vast majority of students enjoy lessons. They are very willing to become involved in discussions by sharing their ideas and posing their own questions. Even when learning is slow sometimes, because the work is challenging and students struggle to grasp ideas, it is secure. This good level of participation in learning strongly supports the good progress students make. Targets for student achievement are appropriately challenging at individual, class and whole-school level and are usually achieved. Attainment in mathematics has been low over recent years but it has improved this year to be much nearer the national average due to better teaching and more accurate use of assessment to gauge understanding and progress. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good because of the accurate identification of their needs, the good support provided by specialist staff and the good assessment and feedback practice in lessons that gives opportunities for all students to influence the pace of their learning.

Behaviour is good: students are supportive of each other's learning in lessons and they are willing to contribute and seek help and clarification when it is needed. Around the site, students are relaxed and friendly, and welcoming to visitors. Students feel safe in the school, and parents and carers strongly support this view. They have many opportunities

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to adopt healthy lifestyles and many choose healthy menu options in the dining room. There is a good uptake of extra-curricular sporting opportunities. Students show a good understanding of the risks to their health, safety and well-being outside of school and use their learning in personal, social and health education, and other subjects, wisely.

Students are keen to contribute to their school and to the community. The school's specialisms provide a wide range of opportunities for them to do this, including helping with adult literacy, providing artwork for the local hospital and a wide range of involvement in local primary schools. Many develop important leadership skills through activities such as Sports Ambassadors, dance leadership and the Sports Coaching Award. Involvement in a range of charity work, and several international links including to a school in Nigeria, contribute strongly to students' good level of social and cultural development.

The good quality advice about future education, training and employment enables students to feel confident about the decisions they make at each stage, and supports them to be ambitious about their next steps. Students' attendance is similar to the national average, and the proportion who are persistently absent has decreased over the last three years. Students' punctuality in the school is good and enables lessons to start promptly.

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers' use of assessment information is good across nearly all classrooms. This consistency of approach, and the degree to which it drives planning and teaching strategies in lessons, are strengths of the school. Many teachers use frequent close questioning strategies to gauge students' understanding and are then responsive to the information gleaned to guide the course of the lesson to secure good progress. At its best, the marking of students' work is informative and challenging but there is still variation evident across departments. The way in which targets for learning are set in lessons supports good progress for many but does not always result in some groups of learners doing work that is sufficiently challenging.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is broad, balanced and provides well for the needs of all groups of students. There are ample opportunities for students who wish to follow vocational pathways, in addition to a range of GCSE subjects. Some students arrive in Year 7 with weak mathematical and literacy skills. Their needs are met adequately through the support provided in each subject and sometimes through the work of the special needs department. The extent of the coordination of this work across Years 7 and 8 currently limits its effectiveness in ensuring that all of these students catch-up and begin Key Stage 4 courses as confident and resilient learners.

The quality of care, guidance and support in the school is excellent. Students' individual circumstances and needs are well known to staff and any support required is provided promptly and effectively. This is reflected in the good behaviour shown by the majority and the degree of pride that students have in their school. Success is celebrated and the pink 'RAP' T-shirts to denote good progress and good levels of participation are worn with pride around the school. The school's work, often in coordination with outside agencies, to support the complex needs of some girls and their families, is outstanding.

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 improvements evident in the achievement of students are a direct result of the vision, commitment and energy of the headteacher who, working with her very capable senior team, inspires and motivates staff and students. Middle leadership varies more widely in its effectiveness but there is significant strength shown at this level in driving improvement and a determination to develop those skills. The vision of the headteacher is communicated strongly throughout the school through close line management and the very well coordinated delivery of whole-school priorities across all departments. Levels of

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accountability are high and staff respond positively. One said, "A lot is asked of you here, but you are supported strongly to achieve it." There is a keen attention to the achievement and well-being of all groups of learners in the school and some important successes as a result. For example, as a result of targeted provision, the progress of students whose circumstances mean that they are eligible for free school meals is much better than is seen nationally. The accent on valuing diversity is a significant factor in enabling the school to fulfil its vision of achieving 'community, harmony, success and growth'.

The members of the governing body are well informed about the school and its work. They carry out their statutory responsibilities with close attention to detail, including overseeing the good value for money obtained through the skilful management of resources. Although some governors have been appointed recently, the obvious passion and energy of the more experienced members ensures a healthy balance between support and challenge for the school. There are very effective systems established to ensure the safeguarding of students and a good level of awareness of this responsibility demonstrated throughout the school.

The school works effectively to promote the coherence of its local community and involves students in specific projects, in liaison with local groups including youth workers and churches. This work is often managed through the school's arts and humanities specialism and is evaluated as a part of that, and individual subject development, planning. Staff are very conscious of the importance of working more effectively with parents and carers. The majority of them attend consultation evenings, specific issues are usually addressed quickly and effectively, and there is a range of useful information about progress and achievements of all kinds sent home and celebrated by other means. However, too many responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate a lack of confidence in parents and carers about how to support their daughter's progress outside of school.

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

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Sixth form

Students make good progress, from lower than average levels of attainment on entry, due to the good teaching and the very positive work ethos in the sixth form. Students are proud of their school and of their own achievements, and obviously enjoy their time in the sixth form. They are excellent ambassadors for 'staying on' into Years 12 and 13. The good relations established between students and the staff who teach and support them are clearly valued by all. Students take the opportunity to continue to contribute to the school and sixth form in many important ways and, in doing so, develop a wide range of skills and experience.

Much of the teaching is lively and interesting and involves a good variety of styles and activities to support learning. This motivates and enthuses students. The quality of the care, guidance and support for students, in subject departments and also with regard to their current personal welfare and well-being, is outstanding. The close monitoring of individuals' progress, attendance and punctuality ensures that appropriate support is given at critical times. Students are appreciative of the time, care and attention that staff give them. There are effective and well-established links with other local providers to ensure a wider range of courses in the curriculum. There is a good match of these courses to students' needs and high-quality advice from teachers about choices at all stages complemented strongly by external partners such as Connexions. The enrichment programme prepares students well for further education, training and employment.

The quality of leadership in the sixth form is good. Planning is based on a thorough understanding of strengths and development needs, and actions are well targeted. For example, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are a consequence of the good professional development for sixth form teaching staff. As a result of the good quality of provision, retention rates and recruitment are improving.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their child's experiences at this school. Several commented on the very good support that staff offered their daughter, sometimes in response to particular needs. Several commented positively on the way that the school communicates with them, including recognition of when things go well, and there is a good level of satisfaction about the provision of information about progress. However, a small but significant minority felt that the school did not do enough to help them support their child's learning at home, and some felt that their views were not always sought and acted upon.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 178 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1244 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	32	95	53	15	8	7	4
The school keeps my child safe	53	30	119	67	3	2	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	31	96	54	17	10	5	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	26	104	58	12	7	9	5
The teaching is good at this school	34	19	110	62	17	10	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	20	91	51	35	20	8	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	13	113	63	28	16	4	2
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)	40	22	98	55	14	8	5	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	25	97	54	17	10	7	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	20	100	56	19	11	9	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	12	112	63	21	12	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	43	24	109	61	16	9	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	38	87	49	13	7	8	4

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



14 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Carshalton High School for Girls, Carshalton SM5 2QX

Thank you for the welcome you showed to the inspection team when we visited your school recently, and for your contributions to the inspection process. It was a pleasure to work alongside you for the two days and to get to know your school. We judged that your school is providing you with a good quality education, and we particularly noted the way in which it has improved strongly over the last few years and has good capacity to continue to do so in the future. You will probably want to read the details in the report published on the Ofsted website for yourself, but I have summarised the main findings below.

The achievement of students by the end of Key Stage 4 is good. The examination results obtained are broadly in line with those seen nationally, and this is the result of many students making good progress. The sixth form is good in all respects; sixth formers are usually very glad to have made the decision to stay on, make good progress and feel very well guided and supported. In fact, the quality of care and guidance across the whole school is excellent. Staff respond to individuals' needs rapidly, caringly and very effectively. Teaching is also a strength, particularly because staff continually assess your progress and respond to the need to adjust their management of your learning accordingly.

Your headteacher and her senior team are doing an excellent job and it is their skill, and the commitment shown by the staff to do their best for you, that has made this the good school it now is. We agreed two areas for the school to work on to secure this very positive trend. They are to:

- develop the curriculum in Key Stage 3 to be more responsive to any shortfall in skills, knowledge or understanding, including coordinating the work to support numeracy and literacy skill development better
- enable your parents/carers to feel more secure about their role in supporting your learning by getting them more involved in the work of the school and finding ways to help them to support your learning at home.

You currently play a significant part in developing your school and staff value that. I know that you will continue to do so. I wish you every success and happiness in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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