

# Harry Carlton Comprehensive School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122868
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359322
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Anstead HMI

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1030
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stuart Nobles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Legg
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lantern Lane East Leake, Loughborough LE12 6QN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 852424
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team saw 41 lessons taught by 37 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, the school council, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at students' books, analysed assessment data, checked policies and read reports about the school from the local authority. The views of 181 parents and carers, 150 students and ten members of staff, expressed in questionnaires, were taken into account.

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

- Is achievement in mathematics now better than satisfactory?
- What is the quality of teaching and assessment like and particularly in mathematics?
- How effective is the impact of leadership and management on improving provision and can the school sustain the improvements in its performance?

## Information about the school

The school is larger than the average secondary. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 5% of students are from several minority ethnic groups. There is a lower-than-average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has specialist status in mathematics and computing and is a centre for extended services.

**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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

At the last inspection the school's overall effectiveness was satisfactory. Since then elements of provision and outcomes have improved, but there has been little sign of improvement in the quality of teaching and in achievement in mathematics. These are key aspects of the school's core purpose and, despite the good improvements elsewhere, the school's overall effectiveness remains satisfactory.

Although there is some good and outstanding teaching, the great majority of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally inadequate. In the weaker lessons, teachers do not use the assessment information the school provides them with to plan work of differing challenge, so the same work is set for the entire class, which is too easy for some and too difficult for others. There is too much whole-class teaching where learning proceeds at a slow pace leaving students clearly bored. Consequently, these lessons lack variety and there are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently or collaboratively. In lessons like these, some students become disengaged from the learning and this sometimes results in low-level disruptive behaviour. This was particularly so in around half the mathematics lessons seen. Around one third of students responding to a questionnaire disagreed that behaviour at the school was good, although they made it clear in discussions with inspectors that their concerns related only to the low-level disruptive behaviour they endured in a few lessons. Behaviour between lessons and around the school is orderly and good natured and students say they feel safe in school because there is very little intimidatory behaviour.

The wide range of extended services based on site work well with the school to support students and their families. The pastoral team working with the extended services provides a highly effective range of intervention strategies resulting in good care, guidance and support. An excellent tracking system ensures any underachieving students are spotted quickly and given additional support to help them catch up. The curriculum provides a good range of academic, vocational and life skills courses which successfully 'personalise' students' experiences and opportunities. The good curriculum and the good care, guidance and support are primarily responsible for the good progress students make in most subjects and compensate for the mainly satisfactory quality of the teaching. However, even the good care, guidance and support cannot compensate for the uninspiring experience many students receive in mathematics lessons and their achievement in this specialist subject of the school is barely satisfactory.

Examination results show a strong trend of improvement over the last three years with attainment in most subjects apart from mathematics being significantly above average. This represents good achievement. It is clear that the leadership of the school has provided satisfactory drive and ambition which are responsible for the improvements seen in attendance, achievement, the sixth form and aspects of provision, which have all

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improved from satisfactory at the last inspection to good now. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is aware of the shortcomings in the quality of teaching and achievement in mathematics. A range of strategies, guidance and training to help teachers improve have been deployed, but this has been overwhelming for some teachers and there is a lack of clarity about exactly what is expected. Although subject leaders are involved in new initiatives and various working groups, they do not have a lead role in quality assuring the work of their own teams and are not sufficiently able to model good practice and to tackle any underperformance. The weaknesses in teaching and assessment were identified at the last inspection and still remain. In addition, achievement in mathematics has failed to improve as it has in other subjects. Considering the school's overall track record over the last three years and its generally accurate self-evaluation, it has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school occupies new and attractive school buildings built and managed under a private finance initiative. At the time of this inspection during the winter, it was uncomfortably warm in most rooms even when teachers had the doors and windows open. This is not conducive to good learning.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the leadership and management of teaching and learning so that lessons enthuse and engage students and raise achievement in mathematics by:
  - ensuring teachers use assessment information to plan work of appropriate challenge for the range of students' needs
  - providing clarity for teachers about what constitutes good practice
  - making sure teachers plan active and varied learning tasks
  - involving leaders at all levels in monitoring provision and driving improvement.
- Improve the ventilation in classrooms.

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

<b>3</b>
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Attainment on entry is broadly average. Students make good progress so that their attainment in most GCSE subjects is significantly better than the national average. In 2010, 92% of Year 11 students completed school with five or more good grades at GCSE. Past underachievement by a few older students has been identified and tackled so that, in the most recent set of examination results, there are no discernible differences between different groups of students. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good and sometimes better progress than all other students. It is a less rosy picture for mathematics. Between 2008 and 2010, students made satisfactory progress and attained average standards by the end of Key Stage 4. The school is predicting a significant rise in examination results in 2011, but based upon observations of the progress being made in lessons during the inspection; this looks doubtful. Achievement in mathematics remains satisfactory. Taking attainment in all subjects into account, achievement is good overall.

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Where learning was best, students were clear about what they were trying to achieve and activities built well upon previous learning, enabling them to make good progress. In some lessons, students play a passive role in their learning because activities fail to motivate them and teachers dominate proceedings and the pace drops.

All outcomes apart from behaviour are good, reflecting the good curriculum and good care, guidance and support students receive. Students' good adoption of healthy lifestyles is shown by their high take up of school meals and participation in active exercise.

Attendance has risen over the last three years and is above average. Students acquire a good understanding of enterprise and the business skills to equip them well for their future working lives. The proportion who leave school and do not stay in education, employment or training is exceptionally low. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They get on well with each other, have a good sense of right and wrong, but their cultural development is only satisfactory because the extent to which they mix and interact with students from other minority ethnic groups is limited.

*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>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<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?**

Where teaching is good it is active, engaging and enthuses students and the lesson proceeds at a fast pace. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson, students were captivated by a real-life projection of a moving water flea. The animal's transparent carapace enabled the students to see its internal organs in action which fired them up in designing their own

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experiment to investigate the effect of alcohol on the tiny crustacean's heart rate. A girl with visual impairment was provided with her own resources with enlarged print and was supported well by a teaching assistant who made sure she could picture the finer detail of the magnified animal. Most teaching, though, is satisfactory and characterised by a moderate pace and challenge, with activities overly dominated by the teacher. There are insufficient opportunities for students to work independently or collaboratively in small groups.

The use of assessment is inconsistent. Students know their target grades and where they are currently in relation to them. Some teachers mark students' work regularly and provide detailed written guidance on how they might improve. Other teachers do not mark work often enough and consequently most students do not know what they need to do to improve in some of their subjects.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a good range of choices at Key Stage 4 which meets the needs of students of differing abilities and interests. Cross-curricular projects, for example the recent project based on theme parks, enable students to engage in multi-disciplinary work requiring use of their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. The school's specialist status has had little impact on the curriculum available during the school day, but does add to the range of well-attended after-school clubs through the provision of a technologically based activity.

The school, working in close partnership with the on-site extended services, provides a comprehensive range of health and welfare support to students and their families. Good care, guidance and support make an important difference, especially for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and have had a marked impact on improving achievement.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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?**

Senior leaders have excellent systems for tracking the personal and academic development of students. These have been used well to target actions and additional support where it is needed most. Consequently, the school has been highly successful in closing past gaps in the performance of different groups of students and the promotion of equality of opportunity is good. However, action to improve the quality of teaching and learning has not been as effective. The impact of a number of initiatives the school has introduced is dissipated because middle leaders are not one of the key driving forces behind them. A school improvement group made up of representatives from each faculty

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take back good practice to their teams, but the impact of this on teaching and learning is not apparent.

Governance is good. The governing body is committed and hard working. It has very good systems for monitoring the work of the school and seeking the views of the community, giving it an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body is persistent and robust in challenging the school to do better. A plan to eliminate the budget deficit has been agreed with the local authority and the school expects to be operating a balanced budget by April 2013. Partnerships with other organisations are good and enhance provision significantly. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school has reviewed what it does to promote community cohesion. It is aware of its context, though its formal analysis is limited. It has planned a set of appropriate actions, for example to widen students' interactions with a range of cultures.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Sixth form**

Students' progress is good. Attainment has been significantly above the national average for the past two years. Tracking data for the current cohort suggests similar results may be secured this year. Almost all students progressed onto university last year, with small numbers choosing to take 'gap' years or moving into the world of work. In-year retention rates are good at over 93%, although the proportion of Year 12 students choosing to stay on into Year 13 is lower at 84%.

Students feel well served by the curriculum offer and feel their independent learning skills are developed well by teachers. Guidance and support from teachers help them to secure or exceed their targets. Tutors get to know their students through regular small-group or one-to-one sessions. Progress is monitored closely throughout the year and the monitoring identifies any underachievement early, with intervention arrangements responsive to each



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student's needs. Sixth-form students make an important contribution to school life. Many volunteer to support students lower down the school and act as additional support for various trips, activities and enrichment programmes. Sixth-formers stage their own annual 'review' and organise numerous fundraising events. The sixth form is well led and managed and is much improved since the last inspection.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Parents and carers were most positive about their children's enjoyment of school and the extent to which the school keeps their children safe. Students told inspectors about how much they enjoyed school life and that they feel very safe in the school. The judgements for 'enjoyment' and 'feeling safe' are both good. In comparison to national benchmarks though, the responses of parents and carers to most of the other questions were more negative than is usual. Of greatest concern to parents and carers was the amount of progress their children are making, the information the school provides them with to help them support their children in their learning and the effectiveness of leadership and management. The inspection found progress to be good overall, but found slow learning in some lessons, especially in mathematics. Comments on several questionnaires expressed concerns about a lack of clarity in the school's communications with parents and carers and a failure to inform them of the outcomes of issues they had raised. Other comments were positive about communications from the school. Inspectors judged the quality of the school's engagement with parents and carers as satisfactory.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harry Carlton Comprehensive 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 181 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1030 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	25	117	65	12	7	6	3
The school keeps my child safe	46	25	124	69	9	5	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	46	25	110	61	21	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	20	95	52	39	22	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	27	15	123	68	20	11	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	13	96	53	54	30	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	14	109	60	36	20	1	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)	23	13	111	61	24	13	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	17	109	60	32	18	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	14	105	58	25	14	9	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	13	89	49	32	18	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	26	14	97	54	24	13	17	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	19	124	69	14	8	5	3

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"> <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.**



11 February 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Harry Carlton Comprehensive School, Loughborough, LE12 6QN**

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school. We found that your school is satisfactory. This is because the quality of teaching and the assessment of your work have not improved as much as other aspects of the school's provision. The quality of teaching you receive is satisfactory in general, although some of it is good and some outstanding. Too many lessons, though, are uninteresting because teachers talk for too long or do not give you enough opportunities to work on your own or in small groups. In lessons like these, some of you misbehave and stop others learning. The school looks after you well and your attendance is better than average. You have a good range of courses to choose from at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and you told us that you feel very safe at school. Consequently, despite the satisfactory teaching, the progress you are making is good and your examination results are better than usual. The headteacher and senior staff are doing a satisfactory job of making your school better.

We have asked your school to improve your lessons by:

- helping all teachers to be aware of what the best teachers do
- ensuring the work you are given to do is interesting and not too easy or too hard for some
- making sure that the heads of faculty are involved in checking that lessons are getting better and are helping their teams improve
- improving the ventilation in classrooms that are uncomfortably warm.

We have also asked the school to raise your achievement in mathematics which is not as good as it is in your other subjects. You can help by always trying your best and by following the guidance your teachers give you about how to improve your work.

With best wishes for your future

David Anstead

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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