

Putteridge High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109685
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	356603
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Roger Whittaker

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	866
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Pollard
Headteacher	Helen Beauchamp
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 37 lessons and observed 35 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plan, reports to the governing body, departmental reviews and monitoring data in relation to students' progress and the quality of teaching. They analysed 152 questionnaires from parents and carers, 100 from students and 41 from staff.

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

- How the school addressed the issue of underachievement and the evidence of progress being made through data tracking, and learning and progress in lessons.
- How effectively the leadership and management, at all levels, are addressing the need to raise attainment.

Information about the school

Putteridge High School is a smaller-than-average sized comprehensive school. The number of students has reduced since the last inspection. The school has specialist college status in mathematics and computing. The majority of students are of White British heritage but the percentage of students from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are above national averages. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is above the national average. The school manages specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in a unit which supports a few students with visual and physical difficulties.

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

Putteridge High is a satisfactory school. It has made rapid progress in the last year following a period of low attainment and turbulence in staffing at senior and middle leadership level, and with teachers across a range of subject areas. Changes to the curriculum and to care, guidance and support reflect the senior leaders' better understanding of the students' needs. Improvements in some of the teaching and the appropriateness of the curriculum are engaging many students more effectively, so that behaviour and attitudes to learning are improving and progress is now satisfactory. Students were keen to tell inspectors how much the school has improved recently. As a result, attainment has improved and the percentage of students on track to gain five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics is significantly closer to the national average. This improvement is evident in the increasingly satisfactory learning and progress being made in lessons and the school's accurate tracking data. The school effectively manages the specially resourced provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in a unit which supports a few students with visual and physical difficulties so that they are well integrated in the school and achieve at the same rate as other students. Other outcomes for students have benefited from improved provision. For example, students reported in interviews that they usually feel safe and know where to go for help. They felt confident that incidents were dealt with effectively. The school's efforts to improve attendance have led to a reduction in the number of persistent absentees; attendance figures are now in line with the national average.

The school has satisfactory capacity, not only to sustain current levels of performance, but also to improve further, shown by its track record of improvements during the last year. These include addressing the significant difficulties with staff recruitment and being on track to achieve the challenging targets the school has set itself. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide clear direction for the school's work. A large majority of the staff understand what the school is striving to achieve and are committed to these goals. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and the school improvement plan identifies the right priorities. The impact of the specialist status cannot yet be seen in lessons across the curriculum where the use of technology to support learning is variable and sometimes non-existent. There is still inconsistency in the quality of implementation and review of planned actions. As a result, activities in lessons do not always meet students' varying needs or match their prior attainment. The school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning do not focus enough on learning seen during the lessons, which results in difficulties in identifying all training requirements for staff.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is good in all lessons so that:
 - activities enable students to develop and use independent learning skills through paired and small group work
 - work is always matched to the prior learning of different groups of students
 - students have regular verbal and written feedback so that they know what they can do and how to improve.
- Ensure consistency in the quality of leadership and management by:
 - regularly monitoring the implementation of new developments so that the school is clear about the impact of its actions on outcomes for students
 - increasing the rigour with which staff monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching by focusing on the learning and progress made by students in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students join the school with broadly average attainment. During the past two years, students leaving the school have attained below the national averages. However, the present Year 11 students are now on track to attain broadly average attainment by the end of the year. This represents a significant improvement in the school's performance during the last year and therefore students' progress is now satisfactory overall. Over the past year, the attainment of Year 11 students has risen significantly with the number of students on track to achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE improving from those secured in 2010. At the same time, intervention strategies introduced to support students who are at risk of failing to achieve A* to C grades in both English and mathematics are proving successful. Data now shows that these students are doing much better. Improvements in the teaching, learning and the curriculum have helped to ensure that students are now on track to achieve the school's challenging targets. Learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory and, at times, good. The impact of the specialist status on improving teaching and learning was seen, for example, in a design and technology lesson where students showed good research skills and worked independently in designing outdoor furniture. However, the specialism is not having a significant impact on teaching and learning in other subjects across the curriculum. The progress of individual students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is in line with the overall picture of satisfactory progress. The minority of students who speak English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. The additional support provided by the unit for students with visual and physical impairment enables them to work confidently with the support of specialist qualified staff in mainstream lessons. As a result, they achieve at the same rate as other groups of students. Additional support is provided by specialist staff from the local authority, which helps students to fully integrate into school life.

Students' attitudes to learning and their ability to apply themselves in lessons have improved over the last year. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, and is good when teaching is stimulating. Students report that behaviour both in lessons and around the school has 'definitely improved'. Students show a satisfactory understanding of how to be safe and adopt safe practice in practical lessons. Students say that incidents of bullying are rare but that there are always members of staff who will help, and action is taken

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quickly. Students have a good understanding of how to be healthy and many take advantage of a good range of physical activities. However, there are many who do not take enough responsibility for adopting a healthy lifestyle. Students are involved in a range of activities, committees and roles of responsibilities in the school. However, the number of students involved does not include all groups of students. Students respect each other and engage well with groups from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	2

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?

Teaching has significantly improved and is now satisfactory, and sometimes good. Where teaching is good, lessons are always well planned and tasks are well matched to students' ability. Students are highly motivated and good relationships between students and teachers are evident, creating a purposeful learning environment. Teachers are knowledgeable and passionate about their subjects and transmit their enthusiasm to the students. This was observed, for example, in an art lesson where planning was creative, activities were full of pace and challenge and students had to think for themselves. They worked as a team, taking the initiative to solve the problem set by the teacher. Despite the improvement in teaching, there remain some inconsistencies which restrict the progress made by students in some lessons. Opportunities are sometimes missed to promote students' development and use of independent learning skills. The use of

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assessment, including marking, is too variable to enable students to always be clear about what they can do and how to improve. In some lessons, tasks are not matched to students' ability.

The school has recently developed the curriculum in order to meet the needs of all students so that it is now satisfactory. The curriculum now has a wider range of courses including BTEC and OCR national qualifications. These are often in partnerships with other schools and colleges, for example hairdressing courses using an on-site salon provided and staffed by the local college. Significant changes have resulted in improved learning and progress. Extra-curricular activity is broad, including a wide range of activities such as sports clubs and an orchestra. Students have many opportunities to be part of visits both within the United Kingdom and abroad. However, the curriculum development has not yet had time to have a full impact on students' learning.

Students and the majority of parents and carers are enthusiastic about the improvements in the care, guidance and support in the school. The new vertical tutor system has helped relationships between students from different year groups and, therefore, helped improve the behaviour around the school. Students are known as individuals and Year 11 students said, 'Staff are always willing to help if you have a problem'. The support for students with visual and physical difficulties results in them feeling safe and happy around school. They are fully integrated and take an active part in the life of the school. Effective transition arrangements ensure that students who join the school settle in quickly and smoothly, and that when they leave they are aware of all the opportunities for future education, training and work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and enthusiasm of the very effective headteacher and the deputy headteacher have focused the school exceptionally well on raising standards overall. The headteacher faced significant challenges when she arrived at the school, including a decline in the attainment achieved by students. Together with the support of the deputy headteacher she has transformed the school by creating a culture of high expectations that the majority of staff support. Resources are used creatively and management structures have been changed to better support the requirements of the school and its students. Intervention strategies are applied which have played a significant part in improving students' progress. The senior leadership team provides effective support for the headteacher. As a result, the majority of staff show a willingness to improve their practice. Roles and responsibilities are more clearly defined and staff are increasingly held to

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account for their performance. However, there is still some variation in the quality of leadership and management at all levels, resulting in a lack of consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and in the implementation and monitoring of planned procedures and policies. Self-evaluation has identified appropriate areas for improvement and suitable plans have been put in place to tackle these inconsistencies.

The school has appropriate systems to communicate with parents and carers, but a minority of them still feel that they are not fully helped to support their children's learning or that their views are not taken account of by the school. The school has a range of partnerships with schools, outside agencies and business. However, the impact of these on students' learning and progress is not fully developed. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is effectively including all groups of students in the life of the school, for example, the management of the support for students with visual and physical difficulties, which ensures that they are fully integrated. However, guidance procedures, while helping students to improve their learning, have not yet enabled them to consistently achieve as well as they can. The school's approach to community cohesion is good because it has implemented the plans to fill gaps in provision, which were identified in an audit carried out by the school. The impact can be seen in the good relationships, which now exist in the school across all different groups. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is very enthusiastic and supportive of the school. However, they are not fully aware of the areas for improvement needed by the school and do not take a lead role in holding the school to account for its actions and outcomes. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly. However, the school does not always seek the views of parents, carers and students in this process.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaires were positive about the school. However, a higher than average proportion of them had concerns about most aspects of the school. They had particular concerns about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and about the quality of teaching. The inspection team found that the school has recognised the issue of unacceptable behaviour and has implemented behaviour management strategies that have significantly improved behaviour both in lessons and around the school. Leaders have also worked hard at improving the quality of teaching and inspectors found that most teaching is now at least satisfactory, and sometimes good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Putteridge 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 152 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 866 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	26	93	61	14	9	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	30	20	100	66	13	9	8	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	28	95	63	13	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	18	82	54	36	24	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	17	11	99	65	29	19	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	18	86	57	22	14	7	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	11	94	62	25	16	6	4
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)	45	30	80	53	17	11	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	19	95	63	24	16	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	16	87	57	21	14	16	11
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	15	92	61	23	15	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	34	22	93	61	15	10	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	24	86	57	17	11	9	6

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.



24 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Putteridge High School, Luton, LU2 8HJ

You probably remember that we visited your school recently. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team and how mature you were in answering our questions and in helping us to find our way around the school. We decided that yours is now a satisfactory school and that the headteacher and staff have worked hard to make sure that the school has made significant improvements.

The levels of attainment that you are achieving by Year 11 are now much closer to the national average. This is because teaching has improved and is now consistently satisfactory and sometimes good and you now have a curriculum that is meeting your individual needs more effectively. This means that you are better prepared to move onto the next stage of your education, training or work. You are increasingly willing to contribute to the school and the wider community. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is much improved. Staff take care of you to ensure you are supported through the school. Your headteacher and staff are enthusiastic and committed to continue to improve the work of the school.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements:

- to ensure that all leader and managers monitor how well you learn in lessons and regularly review the school's improvement plans and their implementation
- to make sure that teachers set tasks which meet your individual needs, enable you to use independent learning skills in lessons and ensure that you know what you can do and how to improve.

You can help the school by continuing to behave well and to focus on your learning in all lessons.

I wish you all well for your future

Yours sincerely

Roger Whittaker

Lead inspector

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