

# Poole High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113907
<b>Local Authority</b>	Poole
<b>Inspection number</b>	378771
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	James Sage 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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	12–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1671
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynne Young
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris Lewis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2010
<b>School address</b>	Harbin Campus Wimborne Road Poole BH15 2BW
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<b>Age group</b>	12–18
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 55 lessons taught by 51 teachers; 16 of these were joint observations undertaken with members of the school's senior leadership team. Meetings were held with five groups of students, some individual students, a wide range of staff, including the curriculum leaders for English, mathematics and science and a group of heads of house, and three members of the school's governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, policy documents, analysis of the quality of teaching and data about students' attainment and progress. Inspectors also took account of the questionnaires completed by 346 parents and carers, 154 students and 89 staff.

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

- How well all groups of students achieve, including those in the sixth form, and particularly in English.
- Improvements made in the quality of teaching and the use of assessment since the previous inspection.
- The quality of the monitoring of students' progress and the effectiveness of the use made of this data at all levels.
- The capacity of senior and middle leaders and the school's governing body to secure and sustain the improvements required.
- How well the school leaders set challenging targets and monitor progress towards these to plan and make effective interventions to improve teaching and students' achievement.

## Information about the school

Poole High School is a much larger than average secondary school. The school is non-selective in an area with several selective schools. The school gained specialist status in business and enterprise in September 2009 and the school is a United Kingdom Career Academy School. The school population reflects the local area and most students are from White British backgrounds but a few are from a range of minority ethnic groups, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Sportsmark and Healthy School Status.

The school was last inspected in November 2010, and was at that time given a notice to improve. Areas for improvement identified were students' achievement, the quality of teaching, particularly in English, the school's monitoring processes and governance.

**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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Poole High is a good and improving school; it has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. Students enter the school with attainment that is significantly below the national average. They make good progress throughout the school and their attainment at the end of Year 11 is now very close to the national average in all key areas, and above average in some aspects. Some groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress so that their attainment is significantly above the average for those groups. Any gaps in the achievement of different groups of students, including between boys and girls, have been closed or are closing rapidly. The prior attainment of students entering the sixth form is also significantly below average; they too make good progress and their achievement is good. The school has worked extremely effectively to ensure that all students throughout the school have good equality of opportunity and that provision is matched well to their needs.

The improvements the school has made are due to a range of factors. The school has an extremely positive ethos that permeates all aspects of its work. This is shown in students' good behaviour, the extent to which they feel safe, by their contributions to the school and to the wider community, and in improvements in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All of the staff completing the questionnaire agreed that they are proud to be a member of staff in the school. The quality of teaching has improved so students make at least good progress in the large majority of lessons, including in English and mathematics. The curriculum is designed to meet their needs and aspirations well. In comparison with many similar schools, a small range of vocational options is available but is used very well in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to support the good achievement of students. The care, guidance and support provided for students are particularly well focused on raising achievement; heads of house play an especially important role in this.

The school has introduced comprehensive and rigorous procedures for monitoring students' progress and for frequently reporting to parents and carers. However, a significant minority of teaching, while satisfactory, does not demonstrate fully effective use of the information this provides to ensure that lesson activities are matched well to students' current achievement, to set challenging targets and to

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make sure that students are clear about their next steps in learning. The good, and sometimes outstanding, progress made by students is due to highly effective interventions, when required, by specialist support staff, by the heads of house and by middle and senior leaders.

Students enter the school with particularly low levels of literacy. The school has introduced an extremely wide range of strategies to deal with this. A small selection includes: the weekly literacy focus for all lessons; the focus on five key aspects of literacy in marking students' work that is used in all subjects; providing students with feedback on their use of literacy skills when marking tests; and changes to the curriculum to provide more specialist literacy sessions. These are having a significant impact on raising students' achievement.

The outstanding care, guidance and support have also improved students' attendance and reduced the proportion of students who are persistently absent. The school's large and difficult site makes movement around the school and punctuality to lessons challenging. It is a tribute to students' positive attitudes and their enjoyment of school that they move around the school with a clear sense of purpose and make every effort to arrive at lessons on time. The care and support for the most vulnerable students and those at risk of underachieving are exceptional and contribute to the marked improvements in their achievements. The school makes very good use of partnerships and external agencies to support those students who face challenging circumstances.

The school employs its specialism and the partnerships it has developed in business and enterprise well. Students' workplace skills are developed particularly well. However, the skills in independence this fosters are not developed further in many lessons.

The school has rigorous procedures for monitoring students' progress and the quality of teaching across the school. The outcomes are used well to inform self-evaluation that is accurate, highly evaluative and analytical. Senior leaders and the governing body are clear about the priorities for further improvement and the actions required. Middle leaders are held to account well and good practice is widespread. The governing body is well informed and holds the headteacher and senior leaders, and more recently middle leaders, to account well; this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. As a result, the school's capacity to make further improvement is good.

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

- To raise students' achievement further and to improve their attainment, all teachers should make more effective use of the information they have about students' current performance to:
  - ensure that their teaching is matched well to the needs of all students
  - set challenging targets for students

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- ensure that students are clear about the next steps in their learning required to achieve these targets.
- Give students more responsibility in lessons and help them to develop better skills in independence and thinking and reasoning skills.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Over the last three years, students' attainment has been low. However, it has improved significantly and is at least close to the national average in all key areas. These improvements in a short period of time are impressive, especially given the significantly below average attainment on entry to the school. This, taken with the improvements in the proportion of students making the expected progress and the good, and sometimes outstanding, quality of their learning and progress in lessons indicates clearly that progress overall is good. Students have good attitudes to their learning and are keen to succeed. The attainment of some groups of students, not least those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is above the national average for that group; this is a result of the quality of the personalised support they receive. There have been significant improvements in the progress made by students in English, mathematics and science. The analysis of the school's current tracking data indicates that the improvements in students' achievement are being sustained and, in some cases, accelerated.

While students are clear about their targets, they are less clear about the next steps in their learning and about what they need to do to improve. In some cases, the targets are set at a level that is insufficiently challenging. Students are keen to do well and they maintain good standards of behaviour in lessons, except in a very small number of cases where there is occasional off-task behaviour because the teaching is not well matched to students' needs. On these occasions the pace of learning drops.

Most aspects of students' personal development and well-being are good. The extent to which they feel safe, adopt safe working practices and their contributions to the school and wider community are good. Behaviour around the school is at least good. The proportion of students who say they enjoy coming to school is high, backed up by the views of their parents and carers. The extent of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is good in all aspects; students have a good understanding of their place in the wider world. As a result of extensive work by the school, attendance has improved considerably and is close to being above average, punctuality to school and to lessons is good, and persistent absence has fallen significantly.

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*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>	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	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall and outstanding in a small proportion of lessons. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and use their subject knowledge well. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support the progress of identified individuals and groups of students. Resources and new technology are often used imaginatively to stimulate students’ interest. In the good and better lessons, teaching is engaging and interesting and the steps in learning are clear and developed well. Lessons have good pace to ensure productive learning, to provide good levels of challenge and to maintain the interest of students. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subject and use their subject knowledge well. However, even these good lessons are often teacher-directed and students are not always given opportunities to develop their own thinking and reasoning skills, which prevents many more lessons from being outstanding. In weaker lessons, students’ progress is not monitored carefully enough to ensure that the work ensures a rapid pace of learning. Teachers have access to detailed information about students’ targets and current achievement and this is clear in their planning. However, this is not used well to meet the needs of individual students.

The curriculum meets students’ needs and aspirations well. Where required, additional and extremely well-targeted support for clearly identified individual and groups of students leads to good, and often outstanding, progress for these students. Considerable effort has been given to developing students’ skills in literacy, with significant impact. However, in some satisfactory lessons, opportunities to

<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

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develop their literacy skills and to help them become more independent learners are missed. Vocational courses are selected carefully to meet the needs of students. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities and many students make the most of the range of opportunities this provides. Many are proud to represent the school in sporting and other events.

The impact of the excellent care and support given to all students on raising achievement, improving attendance and on other outcomes is clear. All students are provided with good advice and guidance to support their personal and academic development. The role of heads of house as 'achievement leaders' supports the progress of many students very well. The support for students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable is especially strong, with very good use made of external agencies when required. The quality and impact of this support are very closely monitored.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</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>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's senior and middle leaders form a cohesive team with a good balance of skills and expertise. The ability of middle leaders to hold teachers in their department fully to account is much improved and has contributed to raising achievement. Governance is good. The governing body provides an effective balance of support and challenge to hold senior and, more recently, middle leaders to account.

Very good use is made of detailed data about the progress of individuals and different groups of students to monitor the effectiveness of the provision and to target interventions to support students. This is combined well with rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching to target the support and professional development of teachers where it is most needed. The accuracy of senior leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching was confirmed by the joint observations undertaken with inspectors. Students are involved well in decision making in the school, not least through the school council.

The ability of senior leaders to promote equality of opportunity is best illustrated by the significant narrowing of gaps in students' achievements and the impact of the improved curriculum. The positive ethos in the school means that there are no reported incidents of discrimination. Safeguarding procedures, including the role of the governing body, are good; risk assessments are thorough and students feel safe



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and are guided well to adopt safe working practices. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has specifically identified those areas of the curriculum that make contributions and the action plan for further development is clear. The resulting improvements have contributed to students’ better understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Students enter the sixth form with attainment significantly below the national average. As a result of mainly good teaching, students make good progress and achieve well overall; achievement is improving. Students develop good skills in independence, setting them up well for their futures. Retention and success rates are high. Sixth form students play a significant role in the life of the school and the local community; for example, through providing support and mentoring for younger students. They participate well in the range of activities the school provides.

The school provides a curriculum that meets the needs and aspirations of students well. Students are provided with good-quality guidance about sixth-form courses and progression beyond the sixth form. The school’s depth of understanding of each student is used extremely well to ensure that their overall personal development is supported fully and that they have a good chance of success. However, the targets set for students sometimes lack challenge. The focus on developing literacy and other key skills established in the main school continues well into the sixth form.

Self-evaluation is strong in the sixth form and is based on comprehensive monitoring and rigorous analysis. Leaders have a very clear understanding of the strengths and of the improvements required to raise achievement further. They provide effective

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leadership and liaise well with curriculum leaders to monitor and support students' achievement. The student leader committee is used well to provide feedback on the quality of the provision.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	2
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 who responded to the questionnaire are generally positive about the school with a higher than average proportion saying how much their children enjoy coming to school and how safe they feel. Parents and carers are satisfied with the quality of teaching and pleased with the feedback they receive on how well their children are doing. Other responses are in line with the average. A number of parents and carers made especially positive comments about the range of additional activities the school provides, about the school's house system and about the support the school provides when students and/or their families are going through difficult times. The few negative responses were investigated and the findings taken into account in the inspection.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Poole 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 346 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1671 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	130	38	188	54	20	6	4	1
The school keeps my child safe	143	41	191	55	9	3	2	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	138	40	182	53	18	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	104	30	201	58	28	8	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	84	24	230	66	15	4	2	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	75	22	209	60	42	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	19	229	66	36	10	5	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	87	25	195	56	26	8	5	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	80	23	226	65	21	6	9	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	24	204	59	25	7	15	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	19	207	60	28	8	8	2
The school is led and managed effectively	81	23	208	60	29	8	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	136	39	178	51	18	5	6	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 8 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.**

12 December 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Poole High School, Poole, BH15 2BW**

Following our visit to your school, I should like to thank you for your extremely friendly welcome. You told us that you really enjoy being at school and that you feel safe. We were impressed by your very positive attitudes, your politeness and how willingly you talked to us. We judge the school, including the sixth form, to be good overall and improving. These are the strengths in the school.

- It has an extremely positive ethos that supports your good approach to all aspects of school life; you make a good contribution to the life of the school and the local community.
- Teachers and other adults care well for all of you.
- You make good progress and your achievement is at least good; it is outstanding for some of you.
- The school carries out frequent checks on your progress and provides outstanding support and additional help to make sure that you do well.
- The good curriculum in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form meets your needs and aspirations well.

Most teaching in the school is at least good, but a small minority is satisfactory and you make slower progress in these lessons. We have asked the school to make even more of your lessons at least good, and to make good lessons even better, by ensuring that teachers monitor carefully how well you are learning, make sure that all of you have work that is challenging and by giving you more responsibility in lessons. We have also asked the school to make sure you understand what you need to do next to improve. You can help by asking whenever you are unsure about what you need to do.

The leaders in your school have a clear understanding of what it needs to do to continue to improve; they clearly have your best interests at heart. They are working very hard to make the school an even better place for you to learn.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

James Sage  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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