

Harry Carlton Comprehensive School

Lantern Lane, East Leake, Loughborough, LE12 6QN

Inspection dates

16–17 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has made the improvement of teaching its main priority. This has been successful and a high proportion of teaching is now good or better.
- Students' achievement across the school has improved since the last inspection. School data and evidence from students' work indicate that this positive trend is set to continue.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and enjoy a range of courses. They have welcomed being given a higher profile within the school recently.
- The school's leadership, including the governing body, has been strengthened through partnership with an academy trust. The leadership of the school has been completely restructured and this has led to significant improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Teachers and support staff all manage behaviour consistently well. Relationships between staff and students are positive and, as a result, behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Students are well cared for and feel safe. Incidents of bullying are uncommon and are quickly addressed.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching in a few lessons requires improvement.
- The great majority of marking and guidance that teachers provide for students is good, but some teachers do not mark work well enough.
- A very small minority of students entering the school with weaker reading skills are not catching up quickly enough.
- The school's systems for knowing exactly how well students are doing are more precise in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, of which ten were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior staff. In addition, inspectors and senior leaders observed short parts of 28 lessons during one lesson period when the work of all subject departments was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, executive headteacher, senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, groups of students, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and an additional 92 responses received during the inspection. The lead inspector received a small number of letters from parents and carers.
- The inspection team observed the school's work, scrutinised the school's data about students' achievement, examined records relating to behaviour and attendance, and looked at documents used by leaders to monitor and evaluate the school's work.

Inspection team

Christopher Moodie, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jacqueline Pentlow

Additional Inspector

Philip Winch

Additional Inspector

Richard White

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harry Carlton Comprehensive School is an average-sized secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below that found nationally, as is the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language.
- Less than a quarter of students are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is average. The proportion of students supported through school action is also average. The proportion of students supported through school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school's recent GCSE results met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for students.
- The school is in the final stages of converting to academy status, and had expected the process to be complete in September 2012. It is becoming a member of the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) and will then be known as the East Leake Academy.
- An executive headteacher, and senior member of the DALP, has been providing the school with strategic support since the start of 2012. Previously, the local authority had brokered a less-formal support arrangement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that students in all subjects receive consistently high-quality feedback on their work
 - accelerating the progress that weaker readers make when they join the school.
- Refine the collection and analysis of achievement data so that:
 - school leaders can precisely monitor the progress of individual students
 - all teachers are provided with accessible data that support the planning of lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The proportion of students achieving five GCSE passes at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, improved in 2011 and was significantly above national averages. Data for 2012 are not yet validated, but there are clear indications that attainment in the majority of subjects continued to be above average.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved significantly since the previous inspection. For two years, the proportion of students achieving A* to C in mathematics has been above average. The school's work to improve teaching in this subject has resulted in consistently improved progress from Year 7 to Year 11.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. There has been some variability between AS and A level grades in recent years, but each cohort has consistently made good progress. Teaching in the sixth form is consistently good, and new leadership has improved the way that performance data are gathered and analysed.
- Students say that they enjoy school and are interested in lessons. The work that they produce is mostly well presented, and they demonstrate good attitudes to learning. Lessons are calm and productive. Students are keen to do well and readily ask questions and listen well to guidance.
- Progress in Key Stage 3 is good. Students enter the school with levels of English and mathematics that are slightly above the national averages. By the end of Year 9, students have progressed well overall and standards are above average in both English and mathematics. Some students make very good progress and achieve well above average standards for their age.
- A small number of students join the school in Year 7 with reading skills that are below average. The school has a well-structured system for identifying these students and providing them with additional support. These students make as much progress as others, but their reading skills do not accelerate quickly enough for them to catch up.
- The achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, improved in 2012. The school's strategies to support these students, which include additional guidance, individual mentoring and close monitoring, have been successful. As a result, the school's assessment data show that attainment gaps between this group of students and others were closed in the recent GCSE results.
- The achievement of disabled students and those who have special educational needs has improved. In 2011, there was underachievement in this group. Effective action and very clearly targeted interventions resulted in progress that matched, and in some cases exceeded, national expectations in 2012.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most of the teaching is good, and some is outstanding. Where teaching requires improvement, the school's leadership team is aware and has clear strategies to raise its quality. These strategies have a track record of success as seen by the improvements since the previous inspection.

- The majority of teachers mark students' work well. Students appreciate the quality of marking and can point to the subjects where marking makes a difference to their work. In English, science and art, students are clear that the feedback that they receive is of great value. Not all departments offer such high-quality feedback and, for a very small number of teachers, marking is weak.
- Teachers have high expectations of students and encourage them to be independent and show resilience. This is best seen where teachers persist with questioning, forcing students to think deeply about their learning. On a very few occasions, teachers spend too much time talking at the start of a lesson and this limits the progress that students make.
- Skilful and highly consistent behaviour management helps teachers to create a very positive climate for learning in lessons. Relationships are very secure between staff and students, as exemplified by one student who said, 'We get on really well with every teacher in the school.' In lessons, this enables teachers and students to communicate clearly and easily with one another, and is an important aspect of students' social development.
- Where teaching is outstanding, the pace of learning is rapid and sustained. The students are challenged and supported in equal measure and are very clear about what they need to do in order to improve. Both teachers and students show enthusiasm for learning, and the progress of both individuals and groups of students is celebrated.
- The needs of all students, including disabled students and those with special educational needs, are well met in most lessons through good planning. Most teachers are making increasingly good use of assessment data to support their planning, although inconsistencies remain. Where subjects are taught in ability sets, the different needs of students are met particularly well.
- Teachers in many subjects are supporting the development of literacy skills. The spelling of key words is highlighted in lessons, and students are often asked to explain their thinking when answering questions. This was typified in one mathematics lesson in Year 8 where the teacher provided several opportunities for students to verbally explore their understanding of rounding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour has improved since the previous inspection and is good. Incidents of disruption in lessons are uncommon and are dealt with consistently well in a calm and supportive manner.
- A number of parents who responded to the online questionnaire expressed concerns about the standard of behaviour at the school. The inspectors found behaviour to be good both during the inspection and over time. Large numbers of students were consulted during their break times, and all spoke very positively about behaviour saying it had improved in recent years.
- Students are polite and courteous around the school and this creates an atmosphere that is welcoming and calm. Between lessons, large numbers of students and staff move through corridors and between floors in an orderly fashion. Students hold doors open for one another and offer thanks to those that help them.
- Students are confident about raising any concerns they have with teachers and support staff. Those who are new to the school comment on how friendly it is, and struggle to suggest how they could have been helped to settle in more effectively.
- Attendance has improved consistently and is now well above the national average. The

attendance of students who are eligible for free school meals has improved significantly and is now in line with all pupils nationally, having been well below it previously.

- Students have a very secure understanding of the different types of bullying. They are clear about the zero tolerance approach to discrimination, for example through racist or homophobic language. Students equally appreciate how the internet can be a threat to their safety, and many support the ban on mobile telephones in the school, as it has reduced cyber-bullying.
- The recently introduced house system has helped to develop a sense of pride in the school. Students are proud of their house-based awards, as seen in assemblies where all students enthusiastically celebrated the achievements of their house and the individuals within it. The new uniform, which includes a house tie, has improved students' appearance and they are well presented.
- The school's positive ethos supports students to develop their spiritual, moral and social understanding. Activities such as field trips, international exchanges, links with Ghana and Belgium, the school's own version of 'Master Chef' and numerous sporting events unite students in working together.

The leadership and management are good

- As a result of the formal partnership with DALP, the executive headteacher is providing significant strategic support for the school. In addition to his own proven leadership, this includes the deployment of experienced senior staff and consultant teachers. Many of the improvements since the previous inspection have come about as a result of the school's engagement with the trust.
- Approximately half of parents who responded to the online survey (Parent View) were concerned about the leadership in the school. There have been several changes to the leadership since the previous inspection. Several new senior leaders have been appointed and they have already had a very positive impact on important aspects of the school's work. This includes the quality of teaching, the management of data and the provision for students who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- School leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Through this, they have been able to improve teaching at an individual level. The systems that have been adopted provide good support for managing the performance of teachers.
- Data in Key Stage 4 are tracked with accuracy via whole-school systems and at a departmental level. In some departments, such as science, this tracking is very well developed. The tracking of students in Key Stage 3 is effective but is less precise than at Key Stage 4. This means that, while teachers may be assessing with great accuracy, the information that school leaders use to assess progress is more generic.
- The school curriculum offers a broad series of academic choices to students when they are preparing to move into Key Stage 4. The variety of vocational choice is not as wide, and some subjects' lower pass rates are the result of students opting for GCSE courses when they would benefit from a more vocational alternative. The school avoids entering students for examinations at an early stage of a course.
- The vertical tutor system, recently introduced by the new leadership team, has been welcomed by students. It offers students more opportunities for individual coaching from teachers and

older students. It also provides sixth form students with valuable leadership experiences.

- The local authority has provided good support for the school since the previous inspection. It has been very involved in the establishment and initial funding of the partnership with the multi-academy trust.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed about the quality of teaching. Regular and detailed feedback from senior leaders has equipped governors to understand how effective the school's strategies to improve teaching are being. This supports the decisions that they make about performance management and salary progression.
- The governing body has fully supported the conversion of the school to an academy. It has worked effectively alongside DALP and school leaders to create a good school in which improvement in all areas is the priority.
- The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements, including those for the safeguarding of students and staff.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	122868
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	406122

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	939
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Roy Adams
Headteacher	Graham Legg and Chris Pickering (Executive head)
Date of previous school inspection	09 February 2011
Telephone number	01509 852424
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