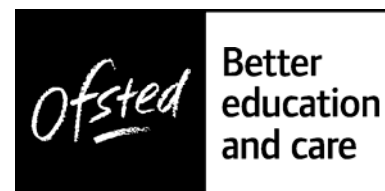


Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division
4th Floor
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Direct Tel 020 7421 6594
Direct Fax 020 7421 6855

www.ofsted.gov.uk



8 June 2005

Mr S Flowers
Headteacher
Carr Manor High School
Carr Manor Road
Meanwood
Leeds
LS17 5DJ

Dear Mr Flowers

Inspection Visit to Carr Manor High School

Thank you for your hospitality during my visit to your school with Ms S Morrissey HMI on 25 and 26 May 2005. This letter is to confirm the findings, which are recorded below.

This inspection visit was arranged in connection with the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG). The focus was the pupils' attainment and the factors affecting it; the effectiveness and impact of the actions which you are already taking to raise the pupils' attainment; and the impact of external support which the school is receiving

During the visit 31 lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with you, the chair of the governing body, members of the senior leadership and middle management teams, the librarian, the learning support unit co-ordinator, the laboratory technician, the school's LIG consultant, pupil members of the school council and two representatives from Education Leeds. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils and samples of work were examined. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, we made the following observations to you, the chair of the governing body and two representatives from Education Leeds.

The school has 739 pupils on roll; the overall trend in enrolment is falling because a significant proportion of parents lost confidence in the school, linked partly to its proposed closure two years ago as part of the restructuring of wider school provision in the area, and partly to the low standards achieved. Consequently, the school draws many of its pupils from a radius of around four miles of the school,

including some areas of significant social and economic disadvantage; many pupils are bussed to school daily. Two hundred and thirty nine pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, which is above the national average. There are 210 pupils who have learning difficulties, of these 21 have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Five percent of pupils have English as an additional language. The school experiences a significant level of pupil mobility due mainly to intakes of children from refugee families and asylum seekers.

The school plans to apply for specialist sports college status. A major PFI building programme is underway, due for completion in September 2006. Contractors have co-operated with the school to minimise the level of disruption to teaching and learning.

Except for one master class for Year 11 pupils, it was not possible to sample Key Stage 4 provision because pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 were out of school at the time of the visit. The school's provision in the sixth form was not a focus for this inspection.

The overall results of the Key Stage 3 national tests for 2004 were the highest ever achieved by the school. The average points score was significantly better than that of similar schools. The Key Stage 3 results are rising faster than the national trend but remain well below the national figures. The school predicts that the Key Stage 3 results will continue to rise over the next two years; this is a reasonable prediction and is supported by recent analyses of appropriate assessment data.

The upward trend in attainment at Key Stage 3 is not continued at Key Stage 4 where there is a downward trend in the pupils' attainment. The school is aware of this trend and, although it is now making strenuous efforts to raise standards; it is too soon to judge their impact on pupils' performance across Key Stage 4. Overall, the school's average points score is well below similar schools nationally. The school is improving the diagnostic use of its assessment data to target effort and resources more effectively; for example, through the provision of master classes in the core subjects for Year 11 pupils. The school has accurately identified that middle and upper ability girls and middle ability boys tend to underachieve; sensible strategies for dealing with this are being introduced by the new headteacher. The school's target of 35 per cent of the pupils attaining five or more grades * A to C is ambitious. The school recognises that its Key Stage 4 results in particular must continue to improve in order to demonstrate the sustained improvement required for a successful application for specialist college status.

The school's attendance rate is low in comparison with schools nationally; it currently stands at 89 per cent. However, the trend in attendance is upwards and sound strategies have been introduced to accelerate the hard-won gains made

during the past three years. There is a strong emphasis on linking attendance and achievement. Overall, many Year 11 pupils are better attenders than Year 7 pupils. The school is experiencing significant success in dealing with inclusion. For example, the numbers of fixed-term exclusions have fallen dramatically during the first two terms of the current school year, from 68 to 18 respectively. The school's learning support unit is a significant contributor to this success. Despite a heavy staff presence between lessons, and the split site nature of the accommodation, too many pupils arrive late and disrupt the start of lessons; too much lesson time is being lost. The school is tackling this weakness. Although fragile on occasions, the pupil's behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory overall. The great majority of pupils are pleasant and polite, welcoming to visitors, at ease with adults and form good relationships with staff and peers.

The quality of leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The school has recently emerged from a very unsettled period, characterised by considerable instability in the leadership of the school, threatened closure, the launch of a PFI initiative, falling enrolment, over-staffing and managing a deficit budget. Governors, staff and pupils have worked hard to cope with these challenging circumstances; they have received well-judged and effective support from Education Leeds. The impact of this external support is appreciated by staff and governors; it has helped the school to keep on track. The governing body understands its responsibilities and supports the school well. However, although governors monitor the progress made by the school, they have not developed their strategic role to hold the school fully to account.

A new headteacher was appointed to the school in April 2005 and has quickly identified key priorities for improvement through a self-evaluation undertaken with the senior leadership team and Education Leeds. The headteacher has a clear view of the quality of teaching across the school and is beginning to address the weaknesses identified; performance management is not well developed but planned. Senior leaders have accepted the need to take responsibility for the strategic development of key issues to support school improvement. They are beginning to understand better their roles as leaders, supported further by the extended leadership team and school improvement groups. The capacity of the senior team and middle managers is being strengthened through staff development supported by the LIG and collaborative peer assessment. Most middle managers understand their strategic roles and they are taking appropriate responsibility for the quality of provision for the pupils' achievement in their curriculum areas; some have not yet developed the skills needed to bring about the improvements required.

It is too soon to judge the impact of the recently introduced curricular and organisational changes on raising standards but there are clear and encouraging

signs of improvement in important areas. However, management systems are not yet sufficiently well underpinned by a comprehensive set of clearly written policies and guidance procedures. Consequently, there is too much inconsistency in important areas of provision; for example, the marking of pupils' written work, dealing with the pupils' distractive behaviour in some lessons, and attention to health and safety issues in science and technology. Attainment and other data are used appropriately for management purposes and for setting targets for individual pupils and monitoring their progress. However, the use of data to ensure lesson planning meets the learning needs of all pupils is too inconsistent across and within departments.

Although the curriculum has been re-modelled to meet the statutory requirements from September 2005 onwards, corresponding revisions to schemes of work have not been planned and implemented for all subjects. At Key Stages 3 and 4, curriculum pathways are being designed to match the pupils' needs informed by analyses of assessment data. Pupils have increasing opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, and show initiative through the school council, although this has not yet been fully developed and is more reactive than proactive. Links with the Royal Armouries have enriched many areas of the curriculum; for example, in technology and the humanities. Pupils have participated in a range of activities and groups, and have enjoyed success representing the school in local and regional sporting and poetry competitions. The school organises a broad range of cultural events and visits through which the pupils' experiences are being extended.

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall with some good features; it is better than the school's results suggest. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 26 of the 31 lessons; it was good in almost one half of all lessons. The quality of pupils' learning, and the progress they make in lessons, generally follows the quality of teaching and is good in around one half of lessons. Where well taught, pupils enjoy learning, make good progress and take pride in their achievements. The pupils' behaviour in lessons was satisfactory or better overall. Although no disruptive behaviour was observed, distractive behaviour, which was generally ignored by peers, was an unwelcome feature in some lessons where pupils were quick to take advantage of weak teaching. The learning support unit is effective in catering for pupils with behavioural difficulties but the deployment of learning support staff and additional adults in lessons is too inconsistent. Not enough pupils know their individual attainment targets or have a sufficiently accurate awareness of the level at which they are working. The pupils' attitudes to learning lag behind the quality of their behaviour in lessons and are too often unsatisfactory, even where the teaching is satisfactory. Too often, pupils are not sufficiently turned on to learning; they lack motivation and enthusiasm for learning, are passive listeners and are capable of making better progress. Teachers

recognise the need to improve the rate of progress in lessons for all pupils and the standards that they achieve.

The headteacher has quickly gained a good grasp of the additional funding that the school receives in support of its various educational initiatives. Although the focus of each funding stream matches the identified areas of need, the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact, individually and collectively, are insufficiently robust. Through planned collaboration, the LIG has allowed the school to establish links with neighbouring high schools, broaden its 14-19 curriculum and the range of vocational courses and work-related learning experiences, and to raise standards. Extra support has been provided for target groups including gifted and talented pupils; for example, through master and booster classes and additional courses. Additionally, after-hours study support has been targeted at pupils who are at risk of underachieving in order to raise standards.

Further action which the school should consider:

- develop and embed a comprehensive set of policies which guide and ensure consistency in practice across the life and work of the school;
- review and revise schemes of work for all subjects to a common format to show progression;
- continue to improve the consistency of teaching, learning and management across the school and improve the dissemination of best practice;
- improve the pupils' attitudes to learning by ensuring work in lessons is matched to their different abilities and learning needs;
- urgently improve the amount of laboratory assistant provision in science; and
- continue to raise levels of attendance and improve punctuality.

The school has more strengths than weaknesses. Under the leadership of the new headteacher and new chair of governors, and with the continuing strong and effective support of Education Leeds, the school is well placed to accelerate the improvements noted during the inspection. The school is overcoming previous inertia and is making satisfactory progress towards raising attainment. While much remains to be done, current progress is encouraging.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and Education Leeds. This letter will also be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

DR R V DAVIS
Additional Inspector

cc: chair of governors
LEA
Education Leeds