



# Chorlton High School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number 105569  
LEA Manchester

Inspection number 274867  
Inspection dates 7 - 8 June 2005  
Reporting inspector David Cox

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

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Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	Nell Lane
School category	Community		Chorlton-cum-Hardy
Age range of pupils	11 - 16		Manchester
			M21 7SL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 882 1150
Number on roll	1406	Fax number	0161 861 8753
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Val Stevens
Date of previous inspection	October 1999	Headteacher	Peter Kennedy

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Age group	Published	Reference no.
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## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Chorlton High School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large, specialist performing arts college with many more boys than girls. The proportion eligible for free school meals is well above average. About half the students are white, British, with many other minority ethnic groups represented. There is a high proportion for whom English is the second language. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average. The proportion of students who are 'looked after children' is high, as is the number who join or leave during the year.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

The self evaluation gives a fair picture of a school that provides a good education. Good improvement since the previous inspection is ensuring standards are continuing to rise with students now attaining average standards by the time they leave school. Parents and students like the school. Students enjoy their learning in a safe and welcoming environment; they develop good personal skills. Students join the school with below average standards; they progress well as a result of good teaching. Specialist status has broadened the curriculum and provides courses that students find interesting. Good leadership has ensured that the school has been steered very successfully through significant change that included a move to new accommodation. Systems for monitoring teaching or analysing assessment data are not rigorous enough. The school provides good value for money and has demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

**Grade: 2**

### What the school should do to improve further

- Pay closer attention to the analysis of assessment data.
- Ensure that systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are more rigorous.

## Achievement and standards

Inspectors agree that students make good progress. They do so because they are taught well, attend regularly and work hard; students enjoy coming to school and want to learn. Students enter the school with below average standards of attainment. Examination results at GCSE were just below average in 2004 and students achieved well. Standards have been rising rapidly and are continuing to do so; standards are now average by Year 11. Different groups of students all make good progress. By Year 9, students make very good progress in science because of interesting tasks and work that is well matched to their needs. Standards of literacy and mathematics are particularly weak in Year 7, where standards on entry have fallen considerably this year; the school has not analysed data enough to know that this year group is different to others. Students achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) which was a weakness noted in the previous report. Students enjoy performing arts; the joint 'Arabian Nights' project with partner schools was of a high standard. The school sets challenging targets and exceeds them.

**Grade: 2**

## **Personal development and well-being**

The personal development and well-being of students are good. The school evaluates this aspect of students' development effectively. Outstanding improvement has been made since the last inspection in raising levels of attendance to well above average. Systems to tackle unauthorised attendance are exemplary.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for students' spiritual and moral development has improved. The school community respects and celebrates the differing beliefs of its members. Students have a clear sense of the difference between right and wrong. They come to school ready and willing to learn.

Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. While the number of exclusions from school is high, each instance is well founded. Students enjoy school and take an increasingly active role in decision making. They adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles.

The school is a caring community and relationships between groups of students and between students and staff are good. Many students make a positive contribution to the community, particularly within performing arts, and most develop the skills that contribute positively to their life when they leave school.

**Grade: 2**

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

Students are motivated by interesting activities that stretch their understanding. They respond well to firm, fair and consistently applied discipline, which are common features of the best lessons. Lessons that are satisfactory, rather than good, do not have a crisp start because the teacher has not established basic ground rules of what is good behaviour. In most classes the work is well matched to the different abilities of the students. Students have a clear idea of how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve, because teachers are clear about the next steps to take in planning and are able to set challenging targets. The school is aware of these strengths and but has not identified that some teachers do not use the available data to plan appropriate tasks for students. Students who have particular difficulties are supported well, both in and out of lessons, so they too can make good progress. Specialist

support staff know their students very well, so are able to target their work to the best advantage.

**Grade: 2**

### **Curriculum and other activities**

The school evaluates the curriculum as good; it meets well the needs of students by providing subjects that go beyond the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are strengths in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11, where students choose a combination of courses, and a flexible approach to studying them, that meets their needs. The performing arts are a particular strength throughout the school; all students study at least one of the performing arts in all years. The range of extra clubs and activities is rightly praised by students; they enjoy them and their achievement is boosted by their participation. The school goes to good lengths to ensure students are taught how to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle.

**Grade: 2**

### **Care, guidance and support**

The school says, and the inspectors agree, that the quality of care is good. Procedures for child protection are well established and understood by all staff. Members of staff know students well; procedures for the 'Every Child Matters' agenda are strongly embedded into the ethos of the school. Young people are encouraged to be healthy and to keep safe. However, whilst there have been significant improvements in healthy eating options available in the canteen, students would still like to see more.

Students in public care are monitored carefully and are progressing well. Support for students with learning problems is good, despite the present staffing difficulties. Learning mentors are effective and highly thought of by all students.

Older students receive good guidance when choosing options and making career choices; however, this does not start early enough in the school. Guidance for those going on to post-16 provision is good.

**Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are judged to be outstanding by the school. The inspectors judged leadership and management to be good. The governors work well with the school. The school has worked very hard to ensure that standards have not slipped during the move to the new building. The headteacher has clarity of vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations. There is a strong team spirit amongst staff that ensures all students are valued and cared for. Parents and students support the school well and their views are sought on major changes to the school.

The school has embraced fully initiatives such as the work force reform and specialist college status. The school has enthusiastically used its specialist performing arts college status as a background to improving standards as well as giving help and support to other schools. All staff were involved in the self evaluation process and the school's own view is mostly well founded. However, monitoring systems are not robust enough to evaluate the quality of teaching so that lessons can be learned and teaching improved. The school does not use assessment information well enough and consequently does not have a clear picture of the achievement of different groups of students throughout the school. There are good procedures for ensuring that the school recruits well qualified staff. Resources are managed well; support staff, such as the learning mentors, are used effectively. The school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve and is well placed to improve.

**Grade: 2**

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## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### ***OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS***

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>N/A</b>
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>2</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Y</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Y</b>

### ***ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS***

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>3</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>2</b>

### ***PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING***

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>3</b>

### ***THE QUALITY OF PROVISION***

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>3</b>
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>2</b>
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>2</b>
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Y</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Y
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Y
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Y
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Y
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Y
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Y
<b>How well learners enjoy and achieve</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Y
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Y
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Y
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Y
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Y
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Yes/No/NA</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Y
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Y
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Y

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Chorlton High School  
Nell Lane  
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M21 7SL

8 June 2005

Dear students,

As you know, a group of inspectors visited your school recently to check on the quality of education you are receiving. Firstly, may we thank you for welcoming us into your school and for talking to us so openly and honestly. Special thanks must go to the Year 9 students who shared the presentation of their research into mobile phone use with an inspector; your presentations were very impressive and the inspector learnt a lot!

You told us that you enjoyed your life at school and we can understand why. The headteacher is making sure that you have a better choice of subjects than we usually see and the teaching is good. The school is generally a healthy and safe place to be, although we agree with you that there is room for even more choice of healthy food in the canteen. Generally, you do well at the school; this is partly because you come to school so regularly and so can make the most of what the school is offering. Teachers, mentors and other staff in the school know you well. They work hard to encourage you to come to school and it is clear that, as you go through the school, you work harder, behave well and learn a lot about the responsibilities of being a young adult. You tell us, and we agree, that lessons are interesting and that you learn a lot, especially when teachers are firm, but fair, with their discipline.

Overall, yours is a good school and is still getting better. The main thing that the school could do to make things even better is to make sure it has a clear idea of how much progress you are all making in all of your subjects, so it can sort out any areas where you may not be doing your best. We have also suggested that the school finds out more about the very best teaching and how it can be spread across the school.

Yours sincerely

David Cox  
Lead Inspector