



Range High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104953
LEA Sefton
Inspection number 277264
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Jim Bennetts HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Stapleton Road
School category	Community		Formby
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Liverpool, Merseyside L37 2YN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01704 879315
Number on roll	1233	Fax number	01704 833470
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Owen
Date of previous inspection	17 March 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Miller

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 277264
------------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Range High School has 1218 pupils, of whom 208 are in the sixth form. Its pupils come mainly, but not exclusively, from a number of primary schools in the town of Formby to the north of Liverpool. Most pupils have reached high standards by the time they enter the school; about one in ten have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is a designated school for pupils with physical disabilities. Almost all pupils are white British and come from relatively affluent backgrounds; a very small proportion of them take free meals. The school has joint arrangements with another school and a college of further education to expand the number of courses available in the sixth form. Range High School has recently been designated a Specialist School for mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school and inspectors agree that this is an outstanding school. All elements of the school's work are at least good, and significant elements are exemplary. Teaching throughout the school is predominantly very good; about a quarter of it is excellent. The school has cultivated excellent personal development and attitudes to learning. New management initiatives over the last year have secured improvements in standards and achievement that are demonstrated in the 2005 test and examination results. The school maintains the strong achievement and work habits that pupils have when they start in Year 7 and takes them further. In tests at age 14, GCSE and in A level studies, outcomes are better than would be expected nationally for pupils and students who set out from the same starting points. The gains made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are truly exceptional. Whilst at present achievement and recent improvement are impressive, there remains scope for yet higher achievement. The school is addressing issues in provision for some subjects and improving teaching and assessment to raise standards further. The school has moved forward well since its last inspection and much has been accomplished through adroit management during the last year. There is excellent value for money. The school has the capacity to become even better.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The A level results in 2005 showed a high standard. They were considerably better than in 2004. Students did better than three quarters of students nationally who started from similar standards at GCSE. Besides this very good achievement, very few students drop out of courses and there is strong progression from AS courses in Year 12 to A2 in Year 13. There are successful links with Formby High School that work to mutual advantage in extending the range of subjects on offer. Arrangements have been secured for joint provision with Southport College from September 2006 for students who might benefit from a vocational component in their studies. In collaboration with partner providers, the school is increasing further the very high uptake of post 16 studies by those who complete their compulsory education at the school. Student's progress, attendance and effort are closely monitored, and students appreciate the way the school looks after them. Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent; all lessons seen were good or better. The sixth form provides a wide and high quality curriculum, and is cost effective. The school judged its effectiveness and efficiency to be good; inspectors consider it outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should bring further improvements to teaching and pupils' achievement by:

- making effective use of assessment in more lessons to tailor work to pupils' precise needs; and

- increasing opportunities for pupils to take initiative in lessons in order to make knowledge their own.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils enter the school with well above average standards of attainment in National Tests at age 11. Information from their primary schools shows that they made great strides forward during the later years of their primary schooling; they were achieving well by the time they joined the school. The 2005 results in National tests at age 14 show high standards in English, mathematics and science. Moreover, pupils at this age are doing even better in relation to the national picture than they were when they started at secondary school. The school has not only maintained their strong achievement at entry, it has strengthened it further. The present position with achievement during the first three years at the school is a substantial improvement on that in 2004 and 2003. Results at GCSE show a high standard. Pupils in 2005 did a little better than would normally be predicted from the results that they had in national tests two years earlier. More than three quarters of the pupils had at least five good GCSE results; this is better than in 2004. There was a substantial increase in the proportion gaining the very highest grades. This is a strong and improving picture. However there were a number of subjects in 2005 where progress to GCSE could have been better. The school is giving attention to curriculum arrangements affecting religious education (RE) and ICT in order to facilitate better outcomes. Though girls did a little better than boys in 2005, the difference is similar to that found nationally. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make at least as much progress as others; during their early years in the school they make exceptional progress in literacy and mathematics. In the sixth form, results are high and are in the top quarter nationally for students who started out with similar GCSE results; the 2005 results were a marked improvement on those for 2004. At all stages in the school, challenging but sensible targets are set and often exceeded. The school and inspectors agree that achievement overall in the school is good, often very good, and improving, but that there is scope for yet higher achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development strongly supports their ability to reach high standards and achieve well. They enjoy learning and are prepared to make an effort in order to improve. They listen carefully, follow instructions and concentrate very well; many establish good habits such as note-taking at an early age. In many lessons an element of contagious enthusiasm pervades the classroom, with pupils showing appreciation and support for others' contributions. Behaviour is excellent with hardly any delays in lessons due to disruption. Pupils move around the site in an orderly and safe manner, behaving very well even when not directly supervised. Strong and

good-natured relationships among pupils, and between pupils and staff, ensure that this is a happy school. Attendance levels are above average.

Pupils are quick to anticipate others' needs and treat others with respect. Recent work on stereotyping supports very well the school's ethos of tolerance and inclusion. Pupils have a strong moral sense and are generous in their support for charities. They are keen to take on responsibility and genuinely wish to help others. They reflect seriously on, for instance, the implications of Remembrance Day and celebrate well both their own and others' culture. High participation in sports, as well as in other extra activities, demonstrates pupils' good awareness of healthy living. Through the school council, pupils have a palpable impact on developments. Pupils are well equipped to ensure their future economic well-being: they have high level skills in English and mathematics, together with opportunities to develop enterprise and awareness of, for instance, the costs associated with everyday living.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall, very rarely unsatisfactory and, in a quarter of lessons observed, outstanding. Teachers have very strong subject knowledge, which they use very effectively. Lesson objectives are routinely shared with pupils so that they are well motivated, understand what is expected of them and can evaluate their own learning. Lessons are very well planned, with manageable steps. Clear explanations and demonstrations enable pupils to rapidly understand new ideas. Activities and resources are appropriate and well sequenced, enabling pupils to build effectively on previous work. In the best lessons teachers challenge pupils well and have the confidence to stand back and let pupils take charge of their own learning. They use questioning very effectively to guide and stimulate rather than direct. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson, pupils made excellent progress in challenging group work to establish criteria for the analysis of a text and then apply this to the task itself. Teachers monitor progress closely and listen well to pupils. They use the information thus gained to raise expectations, encourage greater effort and to support those who are having difficulty.

Marking usually provides precise guidance to help pupils improve. Teachers generally use this and information from longer term assessment well when setting targets and planning activities to suit those of different abilities, though this is not always the case. Often pupils are fully aware of assessment criteria and are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. For instance, in a Year 7 drama lesson pupils were able to evaluate each others' performance of mime and suggest ways in which it could be improved. Although teachers have a very good understanding of the progress pupils are making and what they need to do to improve, this information is not always communicated effectively to parents through the reports.

Teaching assistants play an important role in accelerating the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities; they work closely with teachers to provide appropriate support. In intervention courses in literacy and numeracy higher level teaching assistants have excellent subject knowledge; activities and resources are very well matched to pupils' needs. This, coupled with the excellent relationships they have with pupils, creates a very secure atmosphere where pupils enjoy their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Pupils and students achieve well because the curriculum is exceptionally well planned, closely monitored and continuously refined by managers to meet individual needs. In Key Stage 3 it is broad and balanced, provides opportunities for all pupils to study two modern languages from Year 7 and separate sciences in Year 9. Able mathematicians can accelerate their learning through early examination entry in Years 10 and 12. The curriculum is effectively modified to cater for the small number of pupils who need extra time to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum provides both continuity and flexible pathways, such as the new combination of English and Media, to cater for pupils of all attainments. All pupils now follow an appropriate course in ICT, supported by the school's new specialist status. Continuity for the modest number of pupils studying vocational subjects is being strengthened at sixth form level by the partnership recently developed with a local college. The sixth form curriculum is extensive and supported by well-established collaboration with a local school. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very well planned. Learning in all years is reinforced by an extensive, imaginative and popular enrichment programme which capitalises on the expertise of teachers and partner institutions, such as the City Learning Centre, to offer pupils and sixth formers outstanding opportunities for personal development. Work related learning has been further boosted through successful initiatives to develop enterprise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent care, guidance and support ensure that pupils achieve well. The strong pastoral support team nurtures them outstandingly well. As one said admirably, 'The staff just know what's going on, I think the deputy head can see through walls!' Arrangements to ensure both child protection and health and safety are exceptional.

Pupils' move from primary school goes very smoothly, with outstanding care taken of those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The house system creates a strong supportive environment, with older pupils providing a helpful listening ear for younger ones. Learning mentors offer highly effective individual guidance and also provide a break-time haven for vulnerable pupils. The extra lessons for those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities allow them to make exceptional progress in literacy and numeracy, strongly underpinning their work in other areas. Tight behaviour management and detailed monitoring ensure that any problems are nipped in the bud. Pupils' academic progress is closely tracked and they are very clear

about how to improve their work. Comprehensive and unbiased careers advice ensures that older pupils make informed choices about what subjects to study and how to move on when they leave school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Since the headteacher joined the school a year ago, she and the re-organised senior leadership team have engendered a determination throughout the school to maximise every aspect of pupils' achievement. They have built on well established strengths in teaching and in the promotion of pupils' personal development. The commitment of staff at all levels and pupils' very positive attitudes to learning have been harnessed to raise standards higher in all parts of the school. The school has gone from strength to strength over the last year. The school's self evaluation is exemplary. Its analysis and use of data are excellent. This provides a robust and well informed basis for well focused action to make things better. Significant adjustments have been made to the curriculum and routine procedures in order to secure improvements. For instance, more time has been provided for science in line with national norms, examination RE has been made an option rather than compulsory, the logging of attendance in the sixth form has been tightened. Meanwhile, staff have been held to account for the achievement of the school's targets for pupils in their classes. Parents' and pupils' views have been canvassed and such consultation has led to improvements, for instance in toilet facilities and with ongoing plans for improvement of the buildings. The school's new status as a Specialist School for mathematics and ICT is already providing well managed benefits within the school and initiatives of exceptional quality are under way in the wider community. In raising quality, senior staff are very well supported by prescient and hard working governors who have given a well judged steer to recent productive changes. The school long since tackled the issues for action from the last inspection and has moved forward well; it has vigorous capacity to improve further. The school judged leadership and management to be good in the sixth form and excellent overall. Inspectors consider it to be outstanding across all sections of the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We were very grateful for all the help you gave us when we visited the school. We found out a great deal by meeting with you in discussion groups, in classrooms and around the school.

We were greatly impressed by the school. We think it is outstanding.

- Standards in tests at age 14, in GCSE and at A level are high. Most of you had done well at your primary schools and you continue to do at least as well at Range High School. Generally results are better in each set of tests and exams than would have been expected given your starting points in previous tests. This is particularly so at age 14 and in the sixth form.
- Test and examination results in 2005 are better than in 2004. There has been strong improvement in some subjects.
- You are happy at school. You are well looked after, and as you grow up you become confident and capable young people. You support and encourage one another. You are keen to learn and this is an important element in high levels of achievement throughout the school.
- Those with learning difficulties or disabilities are very well provided for and thrive very well indeed at the school.
- The school is run extremely well and many improvements have been made over the last year.
- The school's new status as a Specialist School for mathematics and ICT is already bringing benefits in the school, and in the local community.
- The school is well regarded by your parents and by other schools.

In a school as good as this, there is little that can be improved. Many of your lessons allow different pupils to answer easier or harder questions and sometimes you do slightly different things according to how well you have got on so far. We think this is a good thing and that there could sometimes be more of it. Teachers often explain things very clearly to you and enable you to make detailed and high quality notes in your books. We saw a good number of lessons where you were able to get on well independently, for example in the sixth form, we saw students themselves giving presentations from the front; in books we saw writing that had gone beyond setting out facts. In such ways, you were making knowledge and understanding your own. We think it would be helpful if there were even more of that kind of thing.

You are very fortunate to be at an outstanding school such as this. We wish you all well in the future.