



Hollingworth High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105853
LEA Rochdale
Inspection number 277427
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 30 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Sharples HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Cornfield Street
School category	Foundation		Milnrow
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Rochdale, Lancashire OL16 3DR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 641541
Number on roll	1148	Fax number	01706 644639
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Richard Parker
Date of previous inspection	25 September 2000	Headteacher	Dr Paul Mortimer

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 29 November 2005 - 30 November 2005	Inspection number 277427
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Hollingworth High School is a larger than average secondary school drawing a significant majority of its pupils from Milnrow and a wider area around Rochdale. The catchment area is varied in character including a small number of wards with higher than average levels of social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly above average. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of minority ethnic pupils is well below average at around 10%.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, which in turn ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve good standards by the time they leave school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has prioritised the need for continued improvement in overall standards across Key Stages 3 and 4 with an additional focus on English. It has already met with some success in this area of work. The school is developing good practice in aspects of assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' progress. Annual improvement targets are being set with pupils in most subjects but the regularity of reviewing these is not yet well established across the academic year.

Overall the curriculum provision meets all statutory requirements, but present staffing difficulties for religious education at Key Stage 4 have meant that the breadth of coverage of the syllabus has been disjointed. The growing provision of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 is providing a good range of pathways which are helping to prepare pupils well for further education, training or employment. The school has recently secured the necessary sponsorship to enable them to bid for specialist business and enterprise school status. The care, guidance, support and personal development of pupils are good. Nevertheless the school is continually vigilant in its response to the small number of bullying or bad behaviour incidents.

The leadership and management provided by the chief executive headteacher, acting headteacher, governors and the senior leadership team are good. There are effective systems in place for carrying out the ongoing self evaluation of the school and as a result, the management team knows its strengths and weaknesses well. The inspection team agrees with all of the school's judgements provided for the inspection. The school has made some good progress since the previous inspection. The capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure there is a greater consistency of approach in the marking of pupils' work, including the advice provided to pupils in relation to how they might improve in all subject areas.
- Improve the provision of religious education in Key Stage 4 in order to ensure that statutory requirements are consistently met.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The overall standards of attainment and rates of progress are good.

The majority of pupils enter the school having achieved standards which are in line with the national average. By the end of Year 9 standards in mathematics and science are above average and in English standards are broadly in line with the national average.

The combined average represents satisfactory progress over Key Stage 3 since the previous inspection and also reflects an improving trend, particularly in English.

Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 4 are good and pupils make good progress. For 2004 and 2005 the overall general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) examination results are above the national average. There is some variation across the range of subjects; standards in mathematics and art, for example, being consistently well above average. The school has successfully implemented strategies that have doubled the number of A*/A grades within two years. Girls achieve higher standards than boys although the gap is below that experienced nationally. A small, but growing proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well, most obtaining grades above levels expected based on their prior attainment. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils well. They show respect for others and form positive relationships with their teachers.

Attendance is satisfactory. Behaviour is good overall, a view that is shared by the vast majority of parents. Small pockets of misbehaviour occur in a few lessons, on corridors and in outside areas, but the school generally deals effectively with them.

The school offers a range of dining options, which helps to promote a healthy lifestyle. The great majority of pupils feel safe in the school and know who to turn to for support and guidance. There are isolated incidents of bullying or racist acts, but these are accurately recorded and the school takes appropriate action.

The pupils' enjoyment of school life is reflected in their positive attitudes to learning and in their participation in a wide range of sports, drama, music and fundraising activities.

There is an active school council. Pupils' views are valued and the school has acted upon a number of their suggestions on such matters as lesson planning, dining arrangements and the areas patrolled by teachers during breaks. Student leaders in Year 11 play a valuable role as mentors to younger pupils and also support Year 7 pupils at their transfer into the school.

Good links with the Connexions service and a well planned programme of work experience and careers guidance help pupils to prepare well for future education, training or employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Where teaching was good lessons often included high teacher expectations, positive pupil engagement and good elements of challenge. In most of these lessons the pace was brisk and pupils' achievement and progress was good, as were their attitudes and behaviour. In a minority of the lessons seen however, there was a lack of pupil engagement and focus, and this occasionally led to small elements of chattering and poorer behaviour amongst small groups of pupils which in turn slowed down progress.

The school's Assessment for Learning programme is now well embedded and staff have received significant levels of training and instruction. Pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own target setting and learning through annual self assessment interviews, which are also attended by parents. At present, the planned termly assessment of pupil's progress towards these targets is not fully in place and there are some inconsistencies in teachers' marking and guidance for individual subject improvement.

Subject leaders take responsibility for monitoring their own departments and all teachers are observed and assessed in the classroom on a regular basis. Feedback to teachers is good and any issues raised are dealt with in a positive and developmental manner. Pupils with additional learning and/or pastoral needs are identified at an early stage and a wide range of support is available through mentoring systems and booster groups. The very good and consistently monitored pupil referral system helps to ensure effective support and encouragement to all pupils in the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provision overall is good. The school offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses, particularly at Key Stage 4. The Key Stage 3 curriculum meets statutory requirements. At the time of the previous inspection, the provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 was judged to be a weakness. Steps to rectify this have been partly effective but, due to staffing difficulties over the last year, provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11 is currently disjointed.

At the end of Year 9 nearly all pupils receive their first option choices. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive two additional lessons on their timetables to spend time on their GCSE subjects or additional educational activities. This enriches the pupil's curriculum significantly. The school has very effective links with a local college with whom it works closely to teach advanced subsidiary (AS) level courses to groups of more able pupils in Year 11. The curriculum provides well for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The range of enrichment activities such as sports, the arts, clubs and visits is good and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils. Effective pastoral systems exist to safeguard pupils and provide support where appropriate. All statutory policies are in place. Regular channels of communication between staff, pupils and parents mean issues or concerns are dealt with promptly. Through discussion with pupils and responses to questionnaires, it is clear that the great majority of pupils feel safe in the school. Although still developing, the marking and target setting arrangements are now beginning to impact on pupils' understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement in subjects. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to make choices regarding future study and employment. These include the 'Options Fair' in Year 9, the 'Aim Higher Roadshow' in Year 10 and 'Connexions' interviews in Year 11. A variety of good quality work experience placements are offered.

Effective links are made with partner primary schools to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and suitable provision is made. Learning support assistants and learning mentors provide good support for pupils throughout the school day including the 'Break Club' initiative. The designated teacher for looked after children works effectively with pupils, social services, families and school staff. Good links are made with a number of agencies, including The Children's Society, to support pupils throughout the school and Year 11 pupils have been trained as counsellors.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The current headteacher is presently working in the school, for a trial period, as a chief executive headteacher to the governing body. To complement this post the deputy headteacher is working as acting headteacher. These two, together with a strong governing body and senior leadership team provide a clear vision and effective leadership for the continued development of the school. There is a good school improvement plan in place which correctly identifies the priorities for improvement and includes criteria to measure when these are achieved. This plan is produced as a result of good teamwork and consultation between the senior leadership team, subject leaders and governors. Each subject in turn has its own action plan which is well linked to the school improvement plan. These are of good quality.

The school has some good established systems for monitoring and evaluating its own progress and quality of provision. The school is piloting a commercial software package, which is already proving effective as a management and monitoring application. The work of each subject area is monitored well through the combined efforts of senior

leadership team staff, subject leaders and governors. This results in the production of some good quality evaluation reports which are used to identify further priorities for action and potential staff training needs. The end of year monitoring of the school improvement plan is not presently as well formalised.

An effective performance management system is in place for all staff, which is currently carried out by members of the senior leadership team. There is an intention to train subject leaders gradually in this process of conducting performance appraisals.

The governing body is strong and carries out its statutory duties effectively. The school's finance is well managed by the governors and the chief executive and funding has been used efficiently to ensure that teaching and learning resources around the school are good. Almost all parents, through their questionnaire, agree that the school is led and managed well.

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
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and to listen to your views about the school. We have decided that Hollingworth High is a good school and recognise that you, along with the teachers, parents and other helpers, all help to make it the way it is.

What we liked most about your school

- The good leadership by senior staff in the school.
- Most of the teaching is good and helps you to do your best.
- The way that teachers develop other parts of your lives such as cultural, moral and social aspects and also how you are prepared for life when you leave school.
- The good care, guidance and support available for you.
- The way that most of you feel safe in the school.
- The range of courses that you can study, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- The wide range of extra activities which are available outside lesson time.
- The interest your parents show in the school and the fact that that most of them believe it is a good school.
- Your overall good behaviour and positive attitude towards school during our visit.
- The interest you show in your work during lessons.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Make sure that the spiritual aspect of your personal life and the understanding of faiths is encouraged and developed through regular teaching particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Make sure that you are given regular high quality feedback on your work and clear help on what you have to do to improve and reach targets in all subjects.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your school and that you are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved.