



Fearns Community Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119745
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280648
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Garry Jones

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Fearns Moss
School category	Community		Bacup
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Lancashire, OL13 0TG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 873896
Number on roll	937	Fax number	01706 875029
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr David Baron
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Mark Smallwood

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	280648

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Fearn Community Sports College is an average sized comprehensive school which serves the town of Bacup and the surrounding villages in the Rossendale district of Lancashire. The area has higher than average levels of socio- economic deprivation and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with that found nationally, but the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average. The pupils are predominantly white British and there are very few pupils from other ethnic groups. The school is a specialist sports college and this has supported extensive links with other schools and with the wider community. The school has attained the Investors in People, Sportsmark and Artsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Fearn Community Sports College provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money.

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching and a small proportion that is unsatisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, the attainment of the pupils remains below that found nationally in both key stages, reflecting the lower than average ability profile of the intake. Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. In most lessons pupils behave well and apply themselves to their work. However, a small minority display poor attitudes reflected in low attendance and inappropriate behaviour. The school has established clear procedures for care and guidance but there is inconsistency in their use. The curriculum is good; it meets all statutory requirements and the breadth of provision at Key Stage 4 is a strength. There is a good range of extra curricular activities. The Sports College development has encouraged extensive links with the community. There are also effective links with other schools, further education and local businesses to support improving provision. The senior management of the school under the leadership of the head teacher has developed a clear direction for the school. There is a focus on raising attainment and inclusion. The senior management team is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but the inspection team was unable to confirm all of their self-evaluation grades. The governors are committed to improvement but are not yet sufficiently involved in planning or challenging the school to improve further. Many initiatives are at an early stage of development and their impact is, as yet, inconsistent. However, there are signs of improvement; attendance and behaviour are improving and there has been a steady improvement in attainment at Key Stage 4. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of all teaching by disseminating best practice across the school.
- Ensure that all teachers set challenging individual targets for pupils to support them in improving their learning.
- Improve the attendance and behaviour of the small minority of pupils with negative attitudes to learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The overall standards of attainment are average the achievement of pupils is satisfactory.

The average level of attainment of the pupils on entry to the school is below that found nationally and relatively few pupils have achieved higher than the expected grade of level 4 in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. Overall, the pupils make satisfactory progress during their time at the school but there is variation between subjects. The

progress achieved in mathematics is very good, but pupils make less progress in English, in part due to an extended period of staffing instability.

The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level 5 in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is slightly below that found nationally in English and science but is above in mathematics. The attainment in GCSE examinations is below the national average overall, but the proportion of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A*- G is above the national average. Results in Key Stage 4 have improved steadily over the last three years, and compare well with the results of similar schools. There is variation between subjects with pupils achieving better results in some subjects, for example, statistics and French. Those pupils taking vocational courses achieve relatively well in them. The school sets very challenging targets and, although these are not being achieved, external data illustrates that generally pupils are attaining their individual predicted targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The progress of the very few minority ethnic pupils and that of other vulnerable pupils matches that of their peers. Talented pupils are identified early in Year 7 and their progress is well monitored.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well being of pupils are satisfactory.

In the main, pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall, but are more positive in Years 7 and 8. In most lessons pupils behave well and apply themselves to their work. The poor behaviour of a small minority of pupils adversely affects learning in some classes. The school has put into place a variety of strategies to deal with this issue but is at an early stage. The behaviour management strategy, the 'Fair Play Plan', has been well received and is beginning to have an effect, but there is still an inconsistent approach to managing pupil behaviour across the school. The recently established learning support unit (The Diamond Centre) is providing good support to a small number of the most vulnerable pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, work to promote an appreciation of the varied cultural and multicultural nature of our society through art and design is a strength.

Attendance is below the national average, reflecting the poor attendance of a small group of pupils. The school has worked very hard with pupils and parents to improve attendance and has been rewarded with year on year improvement.

Pupils are encouraged to adopt safe practices and the school works hard as a sports college to promote healthy lifestyles. Through a variety of charitable fund raising, sporting, artistic and musical events the pupils make a positive contribution to the local and wider community. However, there are insufficient opportunities within the school for all pupils to take responsibility and to develop independence. Vocational education and work experience placements provide good opportunities for pupils to develop skills that contribute to their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching but too much that is merely satisfactory and a very small number of lessons which are unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons teachers use very good subject knowledge to plan challenging and interesting activities and set clear learning objectives. There is a range of stimulating activities and very effective use is often made of information and communications technology (ICT). Brisk introductory activities focus the pupils' attention on the topic, and time targets help to maintain a lively pace throughout the lessons. These lessons end well with a rapid assessment of learning by both the pupils and the teachers. In these lessons pupils are engaged and make good progress.

In satisfactory lessons the pace is much slower, pupils are passive as the planned activities do not keep learners fully engaged. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to reflect upon what they are learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress.

In the very small number of unsatisfactory lessons, there is too little progress as the teaching fails to engage some pupils who then misbehave. Teachers have to spend too much time dealing with these disruptions.

Marking is inconsistent, as is the setting of targets for improvement. Although older pupils are usually clear about how well they are doing, those in Years 7 to 9 are less clear of what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned and meets all statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs and aspirations of all groups well, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The curriculum is modified in Key Stage 3 to provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties but they continue to have access to the full curriculum across the key stage.

In Key Stage 4 the pupils are able to choose from a wide range of vocational courses, together with a good selection of GCSE subjects. The school has established effective links with further education and other training providers to extend the curriculum for all pupils and, in particular, to engage the most vulnerable. The school cooperates with a local grammar school to provide an Advanced Vocational course in ICT, providing a clear progression route for pupils at 16. These links and a strong work-related learning programme prepare pupils well for future education, training and employment.

The school makes good provision for literacy and numeracy through core subjects of English mathematics and science and by teachers across the curriculum offering support for the development of these skills. There is effective provision for pupils to develop skills in ICT which meets a recognised need in the local economy. The school's provision

for citizenship ensures that pupils are making sound progress towards becoming responsible citizens.

The school provides extensive opportunities for sports and fitness activities, and these reflect its commitment, as a designated sports college, to developing the health and well-being of all pupils. These activities are greatly valued by pupils. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. In addition to the numerous sporting activities such as trampolining and football, there are opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests in music, drama and other areas including cheer leading.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall although there are some good features in the care of pupils.

There is a pastoral system which generally provides good care. The majority of pupils feel safe, supported and secure at school and know who to approach if they do not. However, a few pupils feel insecure because of the inappropriate behaviour of some other pupils. Support for pupils who have been bullied is satisfactory.

Arrangements for safeguarding the pupils through a child protection policy, regular risk assessments, monitoring attendance overall and in lessons are in place. Pupils value the effective multi-agency initiative to support physical and mental health, the Healthy Bodies scheme. The school works well with parents and other agencies in these areas.

Guidance and support for improving attainment is satisfactory overall. Targets are set for all pupils but teachers are not consistently using the information they have to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The school recognises target setting as an area for development and plans are in place to secure improvement.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities through the 'Diamond Centre', 'The Link' nurture group, the 'Curriculum Support Centre' and the 'Rossendale Virtual School' is good. This is because staff identify the strengths and weakness of pupils and use this effectively to set appropriate targets. This information is shared throughout the school but, again, its use is inconsistent. The performance of looked after children is monitored by senior staff and appropriate support provided.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and there is clear capacity for improvement. The head teacher has established a shared vision and a real commitment to raising achievement, with an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning. The improvement plan is a comprehensive document with a clear focus on the priorities of raising achievement and inclusion; however success criteria lack sufficient precision. There is extensive monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to support improvement. Support for staff development is effectively

co-ordinated. This reflects a strong commitment to helping staff develop and improve the quality of teaching. These initiatives are beginning to bring about improvement but have not as yet had a consistent impact on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. Self evaluation is thorough and now focuses on departmental self review which is validated by the senior leadership team. The views of parents, staff and pupils are sought systematically. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses, but all of the self evaluation grades did not accurately reflect this. There are good links with other agencies, including local schools, further education, training providers and local businesses to support the development of the school.

The structures for the governance of the school are in place. There is an established chair of governors who knows the school well. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in planning for improvement and, although governors challenge the school to improve, this aspect requires further development.

The school generally uses its finances well to develop the resource base for learning. This is particularly evident in the good facilities for sport available to and valued by pupils and the community. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Fearn Community Sports College

Fearn Moss

Bacup

Lancashire

OL13 0TG

25 November 2005

Dear pupils,

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunities to talk to you about your work and to listen to your views on the school. We believe that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

We were impressed by the determination of your head teacher and his colleagues to raise standards. We think that the range of subjects you study in years 10 and 11 is good. We were impressed by the range of clubs and activities you are able to participate in, especially in sport. You clearly enjoy these activities.

We thought that most of you worked well in your lessons, enjoy learning and that you made sound progress as a result of the help of your teachers. We were impressed by the very good progress you make in mathematics; your progress in English is not as good. We believe that those of you who find learning difficult are given good support by the school. Most of you attend school regularly and behave well. However some of you do not attend school as often as you should and a small number of you sometimes let yourselves down by your behaviour towards your teachers and other pupils.

We have asked the school to continue to help you make more progress in your lessons by ensuring that all the teaching is as good as the best teaching in your school; to make certain that you all have targets to work towards and that you know what you have to do to improve; and to help those of you who do not work hard enough or misbehave to become more positive.

You can help them in this by making sure that you all attend school regularly, work hard and behave well.

Best Wishes for the future.

Garry Jones HMI