



# Garstang High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119747  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280649  
**Inspection dates** 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Caroline Broomhead

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Bowgreave
<b>School category</b>	Community		Garstang
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Lancashire, PR3 1YE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01995 603226
<b>Number on roll</b>	784	<b>Fax number</b>	01995 601655
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr T Ibison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Birch

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280649
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Garstang technology college is a slightly smaller than average comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 who come from Garstang and the surrounding area including Lancaster. Most pupils are white British and a small proportion speak English as an additional language. Fewer than usual come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have free school meals. Attainment of the pupils when they join the school is slightly above average compared with the country as a whole. A small percentage have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has been a specialist technology college since 2002, and has gained Investors in People accreditation, Sportsmark, Artsmark and a Healthy School award in recognition of the quality of its provision for its pupils.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

The overall effectiveness of the school has declined since the last inspection and is now inadequate. Inspectors do not support the school's own judgement of satisfactory. The school has consistently failed to meet whole school performance targets, including some set as part of its specialist technology status.

Standards reached are generally in line with the national average, but the pupils do not achieve as well as they could in relation to their levels of attainment on entry to the school. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, it is not as good as it was at the last inspection. This, combined with the pupils' low aspirations, has contributed to the pattern of underachievement which the poor leadership and management have failed to reverse. The school does not give satisfactory value for money. The curriculum is improving and new courses have been introduced in Years 10 and 11 as part of the technology focus. The school has established very good links with the community it serves and builds on them to promote the pupils' self-confidence and enjoyment. Behaviour in and around school is generally satisfactory, attendance is improving and there has been a reduction in exclusions.

The recently appointed headteacher, with good support from the governors and local authority, has united the staff in a determination to bring about improvement and tackle the school's weaknesses. He has considerable support of parents. The school has accurately identified the need to improve leadership and management at all levels with a clear focus on raising standards for all pupils. Sound processes are being established to achieve this and although the impact on standards is not yet evident, the recent progress made indicates that the school has the capacity to improve.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Significant improvement is required in relation to improving standards of attainment and thereby eradicating underachievement by:

- improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising the aspirations and expectations of all pupils, in particular the most able and boys
- establishing effective strategies to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and making better use of performance data to inform teaching
- setting suitably challenging performance targets for individual pupils, subjects and the whole school, and monitoring progress towards meeting the targets.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

The inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that achievement and standards are inadequate. The standards achieved are well below those expected of pupils with similar prior attainment on entry to the school. Although standards have, until 2004, been above the national average, too many pupils do not progress as well as they could. There is significant underachievement in Years 7 to 9 in English, mathematics, and science, although test results in 2005 showed a slight improvement. Boys underperform in comparison with girls at both key stages. The most able pupils are not challenged well enough and therefore do not reach the higher levels of attainment which they are capable of. Less than half of pupils who attained Level 5 in their test results at the end of Year 9 went on to achieve grades A\* to C at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in 2005. Results in 2005 at the end of Year 11 confirm that the pupils continue to achieve much better in art, drama, English literature, food technology, and information communication technology (ICT) than they do in their other subjects. This shows what is possible when teaching is good and expectations are high. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress in their learning. Generally, pupils are pleased with their achievements, although some recognise that they could do much better.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

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- The school evaluates pupils' personal development as satisfactory and inspectors agree with this judgement. Attendance is above the national average overall but this figure masks the well below average attendance of Year 11 in 2005. Behaviour is satisfactory and most pupils have good attitudes to learning. However, some pupils lose interest in lessons and their pace of learning slows down when teaching is dull and teachers have low expectations of them. Pupils say that both behaviour and attendance have improved recently as systems to check on them are now more rigorous. Pupils feel that their voice is heard through the school council and surveys of their opinions, both of which are becoming increasingly effective in bringing about change. Most pupils feel safe and are confident that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively.
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- The many enrichment activities and residential trips in the United Kingdom and abroad increase pupils' enjoyment of school and their understanding of other cultures. Personal, social and health education, tutorial periods and assemblies all contribute to developing satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. There is insufficient citizenship education for older pupils. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and participation in sport. Links with the community are strong and the development of pupils' economic well-being is being successfully addressed by careers guidance and work experience. Vocational education is not widespread enough yet, although pupils in Year 10 talked

enthusiastically about working as trainee chefs, hairdressers and bricklayers as part of the 'step2work' programme.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teaching is sound rather than inspirational, with few teachers prepared to be adventurous in seeking to challenge and enthuse their pupils. Consequently, some pupils, particularly boys and those of higher ability, are not pushed to achieve the standards which they are capable of. Pupils enjoy those lessons where they are involved in varied and stimulating activities, such as in drama and food technology, but not those where they are largely passive during lengthy teacher explanations. The best lessons are those where teachers set clear targets, have high expectations for work and behaviour and allow pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning through, for example, role play, performance or presentation and independent research. Where activities lack variety, or are too teacher directed, a few pupils lose interest and work with minimal effort. There has been no sharing of good practice because there is no coherent whole-school policy on teaching and learning. Where teaching is less effective, the systems for monitoring and evaluation have not been effective in bringing about improvement. There are similar inconsistencies in assessment procedures. The school does not make best use of the considerable amount of assessment data available to track and monitor pupils' progress towards challenging but realistic targets.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school's curriculum effectively meets statutory requirements for all groups of pupils, except for the provision of ICT for those pupils who do not opt for a GCSE course in the subject. Plans are now in place to change this in 2006. The school has made a thoughtful analysis of the curriculum, and recognises the need to provide alternatives to GCSE. It intends to extend the existing good provision for those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who see little relevance in the traditional curriculum and who are at risk of becoming disaffected with school. Pupils are very appreciative of the outstanding range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities offered. Not enough has been done to promote the development of literacy, numeracy and computer skills across the curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

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- The quality of care provided for pupils is satisfactory. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are in place and understood by all staff. Risk

assessments, especially for trips and visits, are careful and effective. Staff know pupils well and pupils spoke of trusted adults they could ask for help if they had a problem.

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- Support for pupils with learning difficulties and for vulnerable children is good. Learning support assistants, teachers and outside agencies give these pupils constructive individual help and track their progress well. Links with parents through reports and parents evenings are satisfactory. The majority of parents feel that their children are well cared for. Pupils are given good guidance when choosing options and when making career and post-16 course choices.
- In some subjects, pupils know what level they are working at and how to improve their work. Form and year tutors know pupils well but do not yet monitor their academic progress sufficiently thoroughly.
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- Grade: 3

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

The school judges its leadership and management to be satisfactory, but this does not take enough account of their effect on pupils' progress and achievement. Whilst recent action taken to strengthen leadership and management is effectively supporting improvement, inspectors judge them to be unsatisfactory overall. The recently appointed headteacher is leading the school well. He has moved swiftly, with the active support of a new senior leadership team, in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Based on his clear and ambitious vision for improvement, a realistic agenda for development has been set in place and staff are responding well to the open approach to management and the increasing levels of accountability for their performance. As a result, the school has an accurate understanding of where it needs to focus its efforts in order to raise standards to the expected level.

Many planned initiatives, such as the introduction of a whole-school approach to tracking pupils' progress, and the development of teaching and learning, have not yet had time to improve the weak areas of the school. Systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning do not yet provide sufficiently accurate assessments of their quality. Management of subject areas is not yet adequate. At subject level, the analysis of performance data is not sharp enough to guide planning and teaching. Senior staff recognise this and action is planned to improve these aspects.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is very supportive and keen for the school to do better. They have taken effective action to strengthen the leadership of the school, are aware of its underperformance, and are now developing a greater understanding and appreciation of their role in monitoring the school's progress. Their duty in meeting statutory requirements is not fully upheld; not all pupils are developing their ICT skills in Years 10 and 11, and the daily act of collective worship is not in place.

Funds are managed effectively, although budget links with the school improvement plan are not clearly established. Resources are used effectively, and improvements to accommodation are currently taking place. However, the school is not achieving satisfactory value for money because pupils are underachieving.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	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	4	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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

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Garstang High School

Garstang

Lancashire

PR3 1YE

8 October 2005

Dear pupils,

Thank you for welcoming the Ofsted inspection team into your school earlier this week. Many of you gave your time to talk with us and let us know your views and this was appreciated.

These are our main findings from the inspection.

We know that you are proud of your achievements at school, but too many of you, particularly boys, are not reaching the standards that you are capable of. You are setting your sights too low.

There is some good teaching in the school and we know that in these lessons you enjoy the practical activities and respond well to the teachers' high expectations as shown in the good progress you make.

Some of you are aware of your targets in subjects and know how you can improve but this is not the case across the school. The school does not use information about your previous achievements as well as it could to help you set realistic targets and keep track of how well you are doing.

You enjoy the wide range of extra activities and residential trips that the school provides for you and appreciate that transport is provided, for example, after homework club.

Your behaviour around school is generally satisfactory and we agree with you that the school is a safe place to be.

The new headteacher is well regarded by you, your parents and the staff and he is making changes that are improving the school. The governors are well aware of the weaknesses in the school and are taking steps to put them right.

The main points which the staff and governors need to improve are:

ensure that more of the teaching is good so that you make better progress and raise your aspirations for reaching higher standards

set suitably challenging targets for you and the whole school to improve performance, and check how well these are being met

regularly review all aspects of the school's work to ensure that it is as good as it should be.

Once again, thank you for your support with this inspection. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Caroline Broomhead (Mrs)

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B