

Newall Green High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105571
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287269
Inspection dates	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry Holland HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	907
Appropriate authority	Local Education Authority
Chair	Dr Jerry Grant
Headteacher	Mr Neil Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	22–24 April 2002
School address	Greenbrow Road Wythenshawe Manchester M23 2SX
Telephone number	0161 4993878
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The school was visited by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors for one day. The inspector investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, particularly in mathematics and science at Key Stage 3; the impact of the school's leadership and management on pupils' personal development, well-being, and their care, guidance and support; and the impact of the school's three areas of specialism. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes, observation of the school at work, interviews with senior members of staff and pupils, and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Newall Green serves one of the most socially and economically deprived areas in England. The population of the school is predominantly White British; the number of children from minority ethnic groups is very low. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. Around 40% of the pupils are being supported by the school and a range of agencies because they are potentially disadvantaged and vulnerable to underachievement due to social or learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is well above the average nationally. The school is a centre for Severe Learning Difficulties; 52 pupils have statements of special educational needs.

The school has been a Specialist Arts College since 2000. It gained a second specialism in Science with Mathematics in 2004 and a third in Vocational Studies in 2006. The school runs its own Full Service School (FSS) provision and its own Leisure Centre for the community. There is also a post-16 centre on site managed by Manchester College of Arts and Technology. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People status, the local authority Inclusion Charter Mark, ICT Kite Mark and the Leading Aspect Award for its work on transition from primary to secondary education and as a FSS. The school has become consistently oversubscribed in recent years and has just begun a substantive programme of new buildings to provide new accommodation and facilities for its pupils and the community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is a highly effective school that provides outstanding support to its community and the children and young people in its care; it also provides a very good education for these pupils. This is a school where every child really does matter. It does all in its power to maximise the life chances of its pupils in an environment that provides a strong social and moral ethos and which both supports and challenges children and young people to do their best and achieve their potential. In their response to a questionnaire that accompanied this inspection almost all parents recognise this and are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school. The inspection confirms their view that their children enjoy school, make good progress, are safe and well supported, and that the school is very well led and managed.

The majority of children enter the school with levels of attainment that are below and often well below average. Evidence from this inspection confirms that pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Nevertheless, by the end of Key Stage 3 standards generally remain well below average nationally. Despite significant strides in improving standards in English in 2006, results in mathematics and science remain low. The inspection focused on progress in science and mathematics and found that the school's actions as part of its Specialist School programmes, including liaison with primary schools to improve the level of achievement in these subjects, and to improve pupils' levels of literacy generally, are beginning to address this effectively. The school has steadily embedded improvements in assessment. Teachers monitor pupils' performance accurately to ensure they are appropriately challenged and working towards their individual targets. As a result, the school now has secure means of monitoring and tracking performance and can confidently predict improving standards at Key Stage 3.

The progress made by the majority of pupils in Key Stage 4 is excellent. By the time they leave the school, the majority have reached levels of achievement that are much higher than expected given their starting points and circumstances. This is also true for those pupils with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, and those who are potentially the most socially disadvantaged. In 2006, the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE was well above average. This, along with the low numbers leaving with no passes, and the extended range of courses and qualifications available to pupils through its Specialist School programmes, reflect the school's success in maximising the attainment of the great majority of its pupils. A high proportion achieves the qualifications they need to move on to their chosen careers or to further education. The school, therefore, not only raises their aspirations but provides most pupils with the tools to achieve them.

This success has been achieved through a culture that encourages high expectations of all pupils and that challenges the pupils themselves to work towards individual targets that will realise their potential, both academically and socially. This is not easy given the difficulties that face many of the pupils in their lives, and the challenges that some present to the school. The school has made significant efforts to improve attendance; it has been successful, but overall attendance still remains below average. Pupils' personal development is good. The school's support for their emotional well-being, and to help them understand how to keep themselves and

others safe, is excellent. Though the school has to deal with incidents of poor behaviour and some bullying, this is dealt with firmly and it is clear that this reduces as pupils mature and the influence of the school quickly has an effect. The pupils have a voice in decision making through the school council. The school's Social, Emotional and Behaviour skills (SEAL) initiative and the outstanding work of its Visual and Performing Arts programmes help the pupils to develop responsible attitudes to others, and to the wider community. The school fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding all children well. Pupils are very conscious of all the school does to maximise their chances of future economic well-being. The school provides a very good curriculum for all its pupils, which is enriched by a wide range of extension courses and opportunities. The school has successfully introduced a range of 'pathways' in Key Stage 4 through its three Specialisms that enable pupils to study the mix of academic and vocational subjects that most meet their needs, including joint provision with local colleges and work-based training providers.

The care, guidance and support the school provides are outstanding. The school knows its pupils well, enabling them to be both nurtured and challenged in equal measure. Senior staff, leaders of the academic and pastoral care systems, and staff supporting pupils who are most at risk of disaffection or underachieving, work together closely. The systems that underpin this quality of support are complex, but highly effective. They work well because of the commitment and dedication of all those involved. The FSS team are a key feature of this support and provide a model of excellence in providing 'wrap around' integrated care and support for all those pupils who need it, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some of the most vulnerable pupils spoken to during the inspection were clear that the support they have received has changed their lives and their potential future. One parent of a severely disabled Year 11 pupil summed this up when commenting 'The school have encouraged him and challenged him academically and socially. He is (and feels) a valued member of the school community. The staff have always been sensitive to his feelings without mollicoddling him. He will now go on to sixth form college'.

The school continuously evaluates its performance and has made good use of this, and its specialist status, to build an ethos that is always seeking to improve. The development of the three areas of Specialist School status has helped to drive a number of initiatives and improvements across the school as a whole. The school is aware, however, that elements of the Science with Mathematics specialism have developed slowly. The potential now exists for greater integration of aspects of the three specialist programmes to maximise their impact. Its processes for monitoring, evaluating and developing the performance of staff, and for ensuring all subjects and staff contribute to its key development priorities, are also leading to improvements. Nevertheless, the school is conscious that the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff needs to be more consistent in order to provide benchmarks for assessing the impact of teaching across the school.

The successful ethos of the school, the effectiveness of its care and support systems, and the improvements in the school's performance, are the result of the outstanding leadership, vision and commitment of the headteacher and senior staff, and the governing body. They share a common vision and common purpose to create a school that is at the heart of its community. They are succeeding. The improvements

already achieved, the way that it has tackled areas for development over time, and the potential presented by the new facilities currently being built, demonstrate that the school is very well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stage 3.
- Strengthen the systems for monitoring teaching and learning to ensure greater consistency and the capacity to target improvement.
- Accelerate plans to coordinate aspects of the specialist programmes to maximise their impact on improving provision and raising achievement and standards.

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Annex B

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

22 May 2007



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Newall Green High School, Wythenshawe, Manchester, M23 2SX

As you know, I recently inspected your school and this letter is to tell you the results of the inspection. I enjoyed meeting some of you and appreciated your comments and opinions. A number of your parents also completed a questionnaire to give me their views of the school. This was most helpful, so please thank them for me.

My inspection found that Newall Green is an outstanding school that serves you and your community really well. Some of the things I found most impressive were:

- the leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior staff, and the hard work of all those staff involved in the many things the school does to help you develop personally and socially
- the care, guidance and support you receive to help you achieve your full potential. I agree with those of you I spoke to that the teachers in the school 'go the extra mile' for you
- the way the school has high expectations of you in the way you behave towards others and in what you can achieve
- the way that most of you play your part in this: you know what's expected of you and the targets you are set, and most of you are 'stepping up' to meet those expectations
- the way that the school is organising the courses you can study to best suit all your needs; and the extra opportunities you get to develop your talents. You are right to be particularly proud of the school's reputation for its work in the visual and performing arts.

All of this adds up to a very effective education for you.

There are some areas that the school recognises it needs to continue to develop.

- It needs to continue to concentrate on ensuring that all of you achieve as well as possible, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and to help you develop those literacy and numeracy skills that are so important for later on in life.
- It also needs to keep making sure that the monitoring of the teaching you receive helps this to be the best it can be, and that all its specialist programmes work together as well as possible.

The school does an excellent job in trying to help you to be responsible young people and to make a positive contribution to the school and your community. It is doing a really good job in helping you to achieve all that you can and to give you a good start in life. I am confident that the school will continue to improve.

You will all be very important to ensuring that happens. I wish you well in the future, particularly when you can move into those great new buildings!

Yours sincerely

Terry Holland, HMI