



Irlam and Cadishead Community High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105976
Local Authority Salford
Inspection number 287382
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector John Ashton

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Macdonald Road
School category	Community		Irlam
Age range of pupils	11–16		Manchester M44 5LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7755525
Number on roll (school)	995	Fax number	0161 7750599
Number on roll (6th form)	36		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr E Waddell
		Headteacher	Mr A Lamb
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	16–17 October 2006	287382

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Irlam and Cadishead Community High School is an average sized secondary school which serves a socially mixed area of Salford with some pockets of disadvantage. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds and very few require support for English as an additional language. A significant number of students are in the care of the local authority and an average proportion of students has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has just acquired business and enterprise, mathematics and computing specialist college status and also new this term is the school's small and developing sixth form.

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, much improved since the time of its previous inspection. Worthy of particular note are the increasingly good GCSE results, the good teaching and learning throughout all year groups and the school's outstanding curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

Students make good progress from their below average standards of achievement upon entry to Year 7, through to the end of their GCSE year in Year 11, although not consistently so. There is a dip in performance in the three years to the end of Year 9, particularly in English. This is followed in Year 11 by much better than average GCSE results overall but below average when a grade C or above in both English and mathematics is included as one of the criteria for success. Students' performance is also very variable from subject to subject. For example, results in business studies, information and communication technology (ICT), double award science, leisure and tourism and performing arts are usually above the national average whilst those in religious education and fine art are well below average.

The new uniform regulations have brought about well turned out students in their smart new black blazers. This appears to have helped to strengthen the school's ethos. It is a more orderly community than it was at the last inspection and the students' work ethic is more positive. The school is rightly proud of its excellent new sixth form block and the improvements made to the other buildings, but there is much still to be done before the accommodation could be described as good enough.

Personal development and well-being are good. Although still below average, attendance is much improved this last year, and punctuality too, reflecting both the hard work of the school's monitoring and follow-up systems, and the students' enjoyment of the more relevant, more practical curriculum on offer.

The quality of care and guidance students receive is good, and students say that they feel safe and enjoy being at the school. Typical comments include: 'Staff help you to achieve and they never give up on you,' and 'This is a caring, cooperative school, you learn a lot and make friends.' Their economic well-being is helped considerably by the good quality ICT skills they acquire and through the school's own 'preparation for working life' course.

The newly acquired specialist college status is beginning to act as a further catalyst for change, but has not yet had time to make a measurable difference to achievement and standards. The senior leadership team, strengthened since the last inspection, monitors well the impact of its school development programme and has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and standards of achievement. The focus is now rightly on improving teachers' tracking of students' progress at Key Stage 3. Governance is good. Governors are committed to continuous improvement and are thoroughly involved in school developments.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

A good start has been made in the aim of introducing a successful sixth form. More students opted to stay on this year than would have entered further education elsewhere. The pleasant and well resourced facilities and a curriculum tailored to each student's individual needs were key factors in their decision to stay on into the sixth form. Students are making satisfactory progress at least but it is too early to judge the effect of teaching on standards. The study facilities are excellent and each student is allocated a laptop computer to support their independent study. The leadership provides sixth formers with clear guidance and support and involves them well in the establishment of working routines.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve progress in Years 7 to 9, especially in English.
- Improve the consistency of attainment across subjects in Years 10 and 11 and increase the proportion of students with good grades in both mathematics and English.
- Consolidate recent improvements in attendance and improve it further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards of achievement are good overall. Students join the school in Year 7 with below average levels of attainment and make good progress by the time they leave in Year 11. However, they make better progress in Years 10 and 11 than they do in Years 7 to 9. This reflects the school's successful drive to broaden its curriculum and to widen the range of subjects available to students, particularly at Key Stage 4. Increased success at GCSE has been a notable trend in recent years, particularly in the practical and vocational subjects. However, the proportion of students achieving at least five good GCSE grades that include both English and mathematics still falls short of the national average, despite students' well above average point scores overall. There is also too much variation of performance between subjects. There are few significant differences between the relative performance of boys and girls. Those groups of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked-after students, and the few students for whom English is an additional language, all make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good, helped, for example, by a wide and well supported range

of cultural and other activities. However, there are few experiences available for students to reinforce their learning about the diversity of cultures around them. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection and is now generally good. The school has effective strategies for dealing with instances of overly boisterous behaviour. Attendance has improved well since the last inspection, although it is still below average. Good levels of enjoyment reflect these recent improvements. A group of students said that they 'feel part of an improving school'. Students feel safe and secure in school. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and they contribute suggestions that lead to improvements in the range of healthy food now available. Students make a good contribution to the community and enthusiastically involve themselves in an impressive range of charity events; they show a high level of concern for those less fortunate than themselves. The students' above average ICT skills and the good range of vocational courses they experience help to ensure that they are well prepared for the world of work and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students make good progress during lessons, responding well to the consistently well planned activities. Teachers make lesson aims and activities clear. Consequently, students are clear about what they must do and work well. They respond well to their teachers' high expectations about behaviour in lessons, thus making progress without distraction. Students' enjoyment and progress are better when lessons provide lively practical activities, such as a Year 9 history lesson that used music to trigger interest in a lesson about war. The development of good attitudes towards work gives all students a good preparation for more independent work on their Key Stage 4 courses. Mutually respectful relationships between teachers and students are evident through the school. The school is forming a secure picture of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. The range of questioning methods in lessons is not broad enough to challenge the students' thinking consistently, especially through the use of open-ended questions. Despite the availability of progress data, there is inconsistency in how effectively all teachers track their students' progress towards targets in Years 7 to 9.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

A major reason for the students' much improved overall GCSE examination results is the school's outstanding curriculum at Key Stage 4. The school describes its curriculum as 'imaginative and innovative'. Inspectors agree wholeheartedly. Especially successful are those courses that are specifically offered to appeal to many students' preference

for practical learning, such as performing arts or ICT. Their rich and varied curriculum motivates the students very well. Consequently, they gain qualifications that allow them to move on to the next stage of their education and training. Furthermore, there are other very distinctive courses. All take a GCSE course about adult working life that was devised by teachers in the school. It is so effective that other schools have adopted it. A home-grown enterprise course for all awaits GCSE approval. The well supported out-of-lesson activities provide further enrichment. Of particular note is the curriculum continuity area where well supervised students work at their own pace on an excellent suite of computers pre-programmed with work relating to the topics they are studying in their timetabled subjects. This is imaginative and effective use of resources to maintain learning during staff absence. The school's focus is now upon improving its Key Stage 3 curriculum to match that of Key Stage 4. Beginning some courses as early as Year 9 is just the first stage of this strategy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides good care, advice and support. Students are very pleased with it. Procedures to ensure health, safety and child protection are in place and reviewed regularly. Personal development and academic progress are monitored well. Parents have two scheduled opportunities in the school year to meet staff and review progress. These factors lead to good progress and personal development. The learning mentors and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the school's work. Links with outside agencies such as Connexions and the school inclusion officer are strong. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's work. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children in the care of the local authority are well provided for. For instance, a senior manager visits all primary schools with children in the care of the local authority, before they start in Year 7, to ensure a successful transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The senior team has been significantly strengthened and is more effective than it was said to be at the last inspection. Middle leadership is increasingly involved in the monitoring of subjects and key stages, mainly to good effect, but some leaders are more effective than others and the school, assisted well by the local authority, is working well to improve this. School development planning is rightly focused on improving achievement, especially at Key Stage 3. There is a strong commitment to improving teaching and learning by using an extensive monitoring programme, which is producing greater consistency of practice across the school. Self-evaluation is concise, well focused and largely accurate. Governance is good. Governors are well informed and aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They challenge the school in a positive way as well as support it. Resources

are managed effectively. Some parts of the school have been improved to a good standard of accommodation, but there is much more to be done elsewhere. The school has a good capacity for further improvement, demonstrated well, for example, by the good way the issues from the last inspection were dealt with and the effective way standards, both personal and academic, and the curriculum, have improved. The school, therefore, provides good value for the money it receives.

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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
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	2	
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 the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome during our inspection visit to your school. Our very special thanks go to those of you who gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to us. You told us good things about the school, including how safe you feel and how much the school has improved recently, how wide a choice of courses you have, and that you think the school has excellent ICT equipment and a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Other things we particularly like about your school are:

- the increasingly good examination results
- the very promising new sixth form
- the smart new school uniform
- how well taught and how well looked after you all are at school
- how well the school is led.

There are three things we would like your school to do even better: raise standards of achievement further in Years 7, 8 and 9, especially in English; improve GCSE results, including in mathematics and English; and raise attendance levels even higher.

We wish every one of you well for the future and hope that you will always work as hard and enjoy school as much as you do now.