



Wentworth High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105982
Local Authority Salford
Inspection number 287383
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Coleman HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Wentworth Road
School category	Community		Eccles
Age range of pupils	11–16		Manchester M30 9BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7894565
Number on roll (school)	839	Fax number	0161 7877362
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr H Hingston
		Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Keeble
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	21–22 February 2007	287383

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Wentworth High School is a smaller than average size secondary school with a declining number of students on roll which reflects the local population trend. The school serves the communities of Eccles, Winton, Peel Green and Patricroft. Students are mainly White British. An above average number of students are eligible for free school meals. Levels of social deprivation in the locality are above average. There is a 'barrier free unit' for a small number of students with physical disabilities. The school also provides 'Newcomers language provision' for students arriving in the local authority (LA) with little or no functional English. Since the last inspection there is a new headteacher in post and a significant number of changes to staff including those at a senior level.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been successfully improved. However, although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in some respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

The headteacher has been the catalyst for a programme of sustained school improvement. He is determined to raise the standards of students' performance and is very well supported by the two deputy headteachers. A structured action plan is in place. The governing body carries out its duties satisfactorily. It has several new members and is well informed. There have been extensive changes to the staffing structure and the deployment of responsibilities. At a senior level this is impacting strongly on the monitoring of students' progress and of the quality of teaching and learning. The contribution of middle management is less well established and needs greater cohesion to ensure consistency in action plans to raise standards.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving, as a result of effective steps taken by the leadership team to identify inadequate practice, to target appropriate staff training and to rigorously review the impact of this. There is still much to be done to increase the regularity of good teaching. Assessment data is used well to evaluate student performance at a whole school level and challenging targets are in place. For individual students however, there is a lack of consistency in using this good information about their performance, to ensure that the learning experiences provided in lessons are effectively matched to their needs. Some teaching is mundane and uninspiring, which results in students lacking a motivation to learn. This is not conducive to encouraging students with low aspirations to attend school. The school does much to encourage attendance which remains disappointingly low.

Standards of students' attainment are rising across the school though this is variable in different subjects. In the main, standards are well below average and are particularly so in English and mathematics. Students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are making satisfactory progress due to improvements in teaching brought about by the leadership's strategies. Changes to the courses available to students in Key Stage 4 are aimed at making the content and qualifications more relevant to individual's needs and thereby improving students' desire to learn. It is too soon to judge the impact of this on students' achievement. Compared with similar schools and considering students' prior attainment their achievement is satisfactory.

The school has received a number of local and national awards in recognition of its commitment to sport, the arts and staying healthy. Students with physical disabilities, who attend from across the local authority, are well provided for. Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress in acquiring the basic skills of language and communication. The level of personal care shown by all staff, and inspired by the senior team, is a strength of the school. The inspection team has drawn attention

to the governors and senior staff that the school does not meet the current government requirements for safeguarding students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of students' attainment especially in English and mathematics.
- Improve the quality and range of teaching and learning in lessons to increase students' interest and accelerate their progress.
- Ensure compliance with current government legislation for safeguarding children.
- Improve attendance.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of leadership and management of middle leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most students begin Year 7 with standards of attainment which are well below average in English, mathematics and science. Results of national tests in Year 9 show a steady improvement since 2003 and although standards remain well below average, student achievement is judged to be satisfactory. In 2006 students at the end of Key Stage 3 exceeded the challenging targets set for them and their performance compares favourably with similar schools. In Key Stage 4, the school's results in GCSE examinations have for many years been well below average. The percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades has risen consistently from 21% in 2002 to 35% in 2006. When English and mathematics are included, the figure drops to 23% which is well below average and this figure has remained at a similar level for three years. During the same period the percentage of students attaining five A* to G grades has remained around the national average. The most recent results for Year 11 students in 2005 and 2006 reveal average progress in Key Stage 4 and their overall achievement is satisfactory. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those for whom English is an additional language make good progress in the acquisition of literacy and communication skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance rates have remained below average for the last four years, although recent strategies to improve attendance and punctuality are having a positive effect and the school is on line to meet its target this year. Students are now enjoying their education though some groups have expressed concern over the quality of some teaching. Behaviour in lessons is generally satisfactory and better in those lessons where planning is matched to learners' needs. Students believe there is a calmer atmosphere and that bullying issues are dealt with effectively. The school council is currently involved in reviewing the rewards and sanctions systems and feel that they have also been influential in a range of other

decisions including improvement of healthy eating options and the provision of a bicycle shelter.

Students understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles through healthy eating and physical education and personal, social and health education opportunities. Apart from the school council, students take on responsibilities and contribute to the life of the school as peer mentors and sports leaders as well as assisting in open evenings and parents meetings. They also participate in fundraising activities and charity work.

Students' spiritual development is weaker than their moral, social, and cultural development, which is satisfactory. Students are too often faced with uninspiring activities which fail to captivate their attention and interest. Students gain an understanding of the world of work through work experience, links with the community such as the Halle orchestra and enterprise activities which are currently developing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The school has been successful in removing elements of weaker teaching and almost all teaching observed during the inspection was judged satisfactory or better, reflecting the school's own view. However, the inspection identified a lower proportion of good teaching than the school's own observations.

Where there is a passive response to teaching students' learning is weak. This is most common when there is a lack of variety in the teaching and learning styles and when there is a high proportion of teacher exposition. Interaction between teachers and students is often through question and answer sessions, with limited opportunities for independent and group work. When students are given the opportunity for other activities, for example in evaluating their classmates' work, they respond well.

Better teaching is exemplified by good lesson planning and good teacher subject knowledge. Relationships between students and teachers are good and teachers are effective in their use of praise and guidance for further work. The marking of students' work is often very good. Nevertheless, the arrangements for homework are not satisfactory and a significant proportion of students express dissatisfaction with this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Efforts have been made by the school to establish a Key Stage 4 curriculum that better meets the needs of students. New courses such as in information and communication technology and GCSE physical education have been introduced and others, including hairdressing, are under consideration. Observations of options for Child Development and Health and Social

Care confirm the appropriateness of the vocational provision, although the attendance levels were disappointing. The school is improving its curriculum, although the process is very much in transition. Also in transition are the arrangements for personal and social education, for which there are effective plans.

In a number of areas of the curriculum, students show satisfactory interest in their work, but rarely demonstrate real enthusiasm. One activity observed to gain an enthusiastic response was a music and drama project currently in progress with the Halle musicians.

Students confirm their appreciation for the good variety of clubs and other activities available for them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall, though some safeguarding procedures are not in place. Students are well supervised and detailed risk assessments are conducted. A real strength of the school is the care and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are looked after and those with behaviour problems. The Learning Support Faculty is well led and managed with a dedicated team of staff working in the learning support unit, the learning resource base and the newcomers' language base. Provision for the 'barrier free' students provides an example of excellent practice. A dedicated teacher who speaks seven languages works very effectively to build student confidence and they make good progress in quickly gaining the literacy skills they need. The school liaises well with a wide variety of external agencies to increase support and widen opportunities for the students.

Close links with partner schools help students settle in well and the school, aided by the Connexions service and college links, guides students to the next stage in their education or training. Guidance for Year 9 in choosing their options is being developed.

The systems in place to cover students' welfare and health are satisfactory. Students' demonstrate a growing awareness of personal attainment targets in their work, but the provision of planned and consistent assessment for learning opportunities leading to improvement are not embedded across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and match the school's own evaluation. The relatively new senior leadership team provide determined leadership with a clear direction focused on raising standards and achievement. This is beginning to have a positive impact on students' progress through examination results and via the school's internal monitoring systems. Middle managers are not yet providing sufficient consistency in their developing leadership roles. This is evidenced in faculty action plans which demonstrate a lack of consistency in addressing similar

issues across the school. Systems for the monitoring and appraisal of teaching have improved, but an equal focus on students' learning is not yet fully evident. The school has recently implemented significantly improved student tracking and target-setting systems, but the use of this information to move students forward is not yet fully embedded. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. Equality of opportunity and the individual needs of every child are evident in the school's aims and policies and a particular strength is the level of care and support provided to vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The need to address some safeguarding requirements is a weakness.

Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have an awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide the effective support of a critical and challenging friend to the headteacher and his staff. The school's financial management is effective and is prioritised to the purchase and effective use of resources including a wide range of teaching and support staff. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
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

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your experiences. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

- Your school is improving and no longer gives cause for concern.
- Students are gaining higher grades in examinations and achievement is satisfactory.
- Standards of attainment are still below average and need to be raised especially in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and improving.
- There are a significant number of students who do not attend school regularly enough and this means they don't learn as well as they should.
- There is not enough interest in lessons shown by some students. The school knows it needs to make some lessons more interesting and students should expect more of themselves.
- The choices available to students in Key Stage 4 are being changed and the school hopes this will encourage students to work hard and achieve more.
- The government's rules for safeguarding students are not all being achieved.

Inspectors have recommended that Wentworth will be re-visited by Ofsted to check that the correct procedures are put in place.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on working with your teachers to make Wentworth High School an even better school.