



Audenshaw School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106273
Local Authority Tameside
Inspection number 287463
Inspection date 22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Sharples HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Hazel Street
School category	Foundation		Audenshaw, Manchester
Age range of pupils	11–18		Lancashire M34 5NB
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	0161 3362133
Number on roll (school)	1162	Fax number	0161 3203046
Number on roll (6th form)	212		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr T Hall
		Headteacher	Mr S Turner
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	22 November 2006	287463

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school which includes a mixed gender sixth form. The majority of students come from wards which have broadly average levels of social and economic deprivation. The attainment of students on entry to the school is slightly above national averages. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals is below national averages. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'Audenshaw is an excellent school. There isn't another school in the area that offers the same excellent standards, expectations of behaviour or commitment by staff to the education of its students.' This comment from one parent sums up just why the inspection finds that this is an outstanding school.

When entering the school there is at once a feeling of orderliness, warmth and a caring atmosphere. Students are cheerful, polite, well behaved and enjoy being at the school. This attitude carries through into lessons where students are hard working and well motivated by the activities presented to them by teachers. The care, guidance and support that staff provides for students is excellent. Students say that they feel safe and secure in the school, knowing that the majority of problems will be sorted out quickly by a member of staff. This ethos is transferred into the classroom, where students are well supported in their learning and encouraged to produce some very good results. Students' personal development and well-being are also outstanding.

The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is excellent. Teachers are respected by the students and lessons are planned to meet the students' different needs while at the same time encouraging them to achieve to their highest ability. Teachers manage their work well on a daily basis and regularly check how well students are doing. One parent wrote, 'The school provides an excellent environment for learning and encourages the boys to maximise their potential.'

The overwhelming majority of students and parents are proud of the school and glad to be a part of it. This is reflected in the good levels of pupil attendance, behaviour around the school and the very high number of positive responses in the parent questionnaires. At present the students have only had a voice on school matters through the sixth form representatives. However, the school has plans in place to change this and ensure that all year groups are represented on a proposed new school council.

The overall standard of work ranges from good to outstanding. Importantly, students make outstanding progress by the time they leave school or the sixth form. Students are offered a curriculum which is presently traditional in nature but meets all statutory requirements. Aspects such as the work-related curriculum and access to vocational courses are underdeveloped in the school.

The headteacher and his management team provide excellent leadership. This leadership is a major reason why standards of education and care remain so high across the school. Governors are well established as 'critical friends' to the school and carry out their legal duties efficiently. Similarly, middle leaders are developing in their role and know their subject areas well. However, there is scope for them to be involved more in the overall self-evaluation of the whole school. Nevertheless, the senior leadership has completed an accurate evaluation of the school which demonstrates that it knows the strengths and weaknesses well. There is the right mix of personnel and skills among the leadership to deliver further excellent improvement in the future.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership, management and teaching across the sixth form is outstanding. A large number of students chose to stay on into the sixth form following very comprehensive and high quality advice prior to selecting courses. All students attend a residential induction process so that they are very clear about the school's expectations of them before entering the sixth form. The great majority of students enter the sixth form having achieved good or very good standards of attainment by the time they leave Year 11. This pattern of performance continues so that, by the end of Year 13, students make outstanding progress and produce some outstanding results at A level. The quality of care, guidance and individual support for the students is excellent. One student commented, 'we have structured support in our free time which keeps us focused on our work'. Students' progress is monitored rigorously. They know their A-level targets and what they must do to reach them. The sixth form provides excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the vocational curriculum at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that whole school self-evaluation includes involvement and inputs from a wider audience.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students enter the school with standards of attainment which are slightly above national average. They make outstanding progress during their time at Audenshaw and reach well above average standards by the time they leave Year 11. In 2005, the progress students made placed the school in the top 10% band of schools nationally. Unvalidated data for 2006 indicates that this will be maintained. In 2005 performance in the three core subjects at Key Stage 3 was well above national averages. Last year the performance in English dipped, with 10% fewer students achieving Level 5 or above. Nevertheless, standards of attainment and rates of progress by the end of Year 9 remain good. The standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 range from good to very good. Students continue to make very good progress by the time they leave school. In 2005, the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C GCSEs fell by 5% from the previous year to 75%. However, this figure was maintained last year and still represents attainment which is well above national averages. The picture in the sixth form is even better, where students' progress and standards of attainment last year are both outstanding by the end of Year 13.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Excellent behaviour, positive attitudes to learning and good relationships underpin this happy school. Students enjoy their time in school, not only in lessons but in the range of other activities on offer. One parent wrote, 'our son has become an enthusiastic, happy boy at Audenshaw who gets up independently at 6.30am in a hurry to start school'. Attendance is consistently well above the national average. The school actively promotes healthy living through the recently revamped dinner menu and high levels of pupil participation in physical education and extra-curricular sport.

Students respond positively to the opportunities provided for them to play an active part in school life and the wider community. They readily give their time to fundraising activities. Students appreciate the support provided by the well-established peer counselling system. They generally feel safe and benefit from a friendly cooperative atmosphere where bullying is rare. Work experience in Year 10 and an effective careers education programme ensures that students develop some of the skills needed for the world of work. Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. They reflect on their own and others' actions and have a strong appreciation of how to treat others. Until now pupil opinion has only been sought from the sixth form and students from Years 7 to 11 have had little input. The school now has well developed plans to include students from all year groups on the school council.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The outstanding quality of teaching and learning is making a major contribution to high standards and achievement across the school. Teachers have a good knowledge and grasp of their subject. They use a range of teaching and learning methods to motivate and engage students. The majority of students make very good progress in relation to their ability. The school has introduced a common approach to the setting of targets and checking individual pupil progress. As a result, students know how to improve their work because of the good advice and guidance and the specific learning targets set by teachers. Parents receive regular reports on their child's effort and progress in all subjects. 'The school is very good at listening to concerns and the effort grade system, reports and parents' evenings are very useful and informative' wrote one parent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum in Years 7 to 11 meets statutory requirements. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) was an issue in the previous inspection. However, the school has now introduced ICT courses for all students in Year 10 leading to accreditation at the end of Year 11. Furthermore, access to ICT for all subject areas has improved with the recent addition of two ICT suites.

At present, vocational courses are underdeveloped either at GCSE or in the sixth form, but the school is attempting to address this through its specialist college bid. The school successfully encourages wide participation in a range of extra-curricular activities that enrich the lives of students and contributes significantly to their enjoyment and achievement. One pupil said, 'There are loads of extra-curricular activities and teachers dedicate hours and hours to activities after school.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

'The whole ethos of the school is captured by a caring, supportive and a well-disciplined structure.' This statement from one parent summarises the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. One pupil said, 'This is a friendly school and teachers know you as individuals.' Students know they can turn to an adult in confidence if necessary. Collaboration with outside support agencies is excellent and vulnerable children receive sensitive help and support. Child protection arrangements are in place and fully understood by staff. Guidance is very effective when students enter the school and when they make their option choices. Students are well supported to make informed decisions about their future and as a result, confidently transfer on to the sixth form or employment. Students are aware of their targets and what they must do to improve. The school works well with parents who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. There is very good collaboration between the sixth form and the main school. Peer mentoring for younger students and support with reading are just some examples. One pupil said, 'We have a good community feel to the school and everyone plays their part.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

There is a common vision which is focused upon achieving the best standards for all students. This is a commonly shared ethos which filters across all subjects and all levels of management. This is evidenced by the high standards of achievement across the school and sixth form. There is a good quality strategic development plan which

identifies well the priorities for moving the school forward. Subject leaders, in turn, produce good development plans which link well to the whole school priorities.

Systems and procedures for monitoring performance and progress are very well established and very effective. This includes the work of senior managers, governors and middle managers. Performance management is well established for teachers, with line management roles clearly defined. This is not yet established for non-teaching staff. The senior management and governors' knowledge of the school is excellent as seen through the school's recent self- evaluation report. However, middle leaders and other partners are not yet fully involved in the production of this report. The school is generally very good at keeping parents informed and seeking their opinions on school matters. However, through the parental questionnaires, a small minority (8%) of parents felt that their concerns were not always taken into account.

The governing body is very effective as a critical friend and offers rigorous challenge to the school. It is supportive of the school and monitors all aspects of school life well, ensuring that it offers excellent value for money. The leadership of the school has made good progress in addressing the issues from the previous inspection. The capacity for the school to improve further is outstanding.

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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>	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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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 the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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 welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and to listen to your views about the school. We have decided that Audenshaw School is an outstanding school and recognise that you, along with the teachers, parents and other helpers, all help to make it the way it is.

What we liked most about your school

- Your outstanding behaviour, manners and attitude towards school.
- The interest you show and outstanding progress you make in lessons.
- The high standards you achieve during your time at school and in public examinations.
- The excellent leadership of the school by the headteacher, senior managers and governors.
- The majority of the teaching is good or outstanding and helps you to do your best.
- The excellent care, guidance and support available for you.
- The wide range of activities available to you at lunchtime and after school.
- The interest your parents show in the school and that most of them rightly believe it is an excellent school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Develop more vocational courses/choices particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Make sure that more people are involved in the whole school self- evaluation process.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your school and that you are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved. We found our day in the school to be a most delightful experience.