



The Deanery Church of England High School and Sixth Form College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106534
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287542
Inspection date 6 February 2007
Reporting inspector Garry Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Frog Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Wigan
Age range of pupils	11–18		Lancashire WN1 1HQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 768801
Number on roll (school)	1643	Fax number	01942 202293
Number on roll (6th form)	243	Chair	Mr D Mills
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs J Rowlands
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001		

Age group 11–18	Inspection date 6 February 2007	Inspection number 287542
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is an above average size comprehensive school with a sixth form serving the town of Wigan and an extensive surrounding area. The area has considerable variation in its socio-economic characteristics, but the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below that found nationally. There is a small, but increasing, proportion of students from minority ethnic communities, but only eight students have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, but the number of students with a statement for special educational needs is in line with that found nationally. The school is an established technology college, a training school and a Leading Edge Partnership school. The school has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides satisfactory value for money. However, there are some very good features in the provision notably in aspects of the curriculum and the pastoral care of students. The personal development and well-being of students are good. This reflects the very good pastoral care that is provided within the main school and the sixth form. The vast majority of parents are happy with the quality of education provided for their children. Students enjoy their education at the school, they attend regularly and the vast majority behave extremely well in lessons and around school. Students feel safe within school: they believe that bullying is rare and that any incidents are dealt with effectively by senior staff. The Christian ethos of the school is strong and the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of students is outstanding. Students are proud of their school and this includes the students in the sixth form.

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. The provision of a range of pathways in Key Stage 4, which include vocational provision utilising links with a specialist agricultural college, is a particular strength. The specialist school status has increased the range of provision and links with the community. The range of courses within the sixth form is good and meets the needs of students well. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities which include an extensive list of clubs, music and sporting opportunities. In addition, students have opportunities to participate in a wide range of competitions and to undertake trips, including foreign visits.

The students enter the school with attainment that is slightly above average. At the end of Key Stage 3 attainment remained above the national average and continued to improve in 2006. Students' progress in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory overall, but their progress in English was weaker than in mathematics and science in 2006. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been consistently above the national average for all indicators. However, in 2006 results dipped and the indicator of five plus A* to C grades at GCSE fell below the national average. This meant that technology college targets for grades A* to C at GCSE in design and technology, mathematics and science were missed although targets for A* to G grades were achieved. The published data for 2005 shows that students' achievement in Key Stage 4 was weaker than in Key Stage 3 and that their progress in English was poor. Results from 2006 suggest that this trend has continued. However, the monitoring data provided by the school shows that progress has improved in core subjects and students' achievement is satisfactory overall. In part, the satisfactory progress reflects teaching that is satisfactory overall, although there is some teaching that is good or outstanding. Systems for monitoring the progress of students are in place, but these are not being used consistently and effectively to drive up standards in all subjects. The heads of house are being increasingly involved in this work, but this is at an early stage of development and has yet to impact fully.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The self-evaluation of the school was accurate and recognised the areas for development, although the grades for curriculum and care and guidance were too ambitious. The school is developing its

systems for departmental self review to inform departmental and school improvement planning. The role of middle managers is being extended through this process, but this is yet to be fully embedded and there is inconsistency in the approach to raising achievement. There is insufficient emphasis on raising achievement within the current school improvement plan, but this is being reviewed.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The sixth form is well managed. The personal development and well-being of the students are very good due to the very good care and guidance they receive. The impact of this is seen in the very high retention rates of students in the sixth form. Students have a wide range of opportunities to contribute to the development of the school through taking on positions of responsibility and through the sixth form council. They are actively involved in the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available. In addition, students are active in working with other students to raise funds for local charities. The range of courses available in the sixth form meets the needs of students and has been widened to include opportunities for e-learning and for developing key skills.

Levels of attainment in the sixth form are satisfactory overall, as is the progress that students make. Attainment is better in the vocational GCE courses than in traditional A level and AS level GCE subjects. There are systems in place to monitor progress, but these do not place sufficient focus on the role of departmental managers as well as pastoral staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of achievement in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the monitoring of progress in the main school and sixth form to provide consistent guidance to students on how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the school with attainment which is slightly above average. At the end of Key Stage 3 the attainment is good being significantly above average. In 2006 attainment rose further in mathematics and science and the standards in English remained high. This represents progress which is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards were consistently above the national average in all indicators until 2005. In 2006 the results dipped and the proportion of students gaining five plus GCSE grades A* to C including English and mathematics fell below the national average. All other indicators remain above the national average. Overall attainment is good.

Progress is better in Key Stage 3 than in Key Stage 4. The progress that students made in Key Stage 4 has been slower than it should have been for the last two years. Progress in English in 2005 from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 was poor. However, monitoring data available within the school confirm that progress has improved and is now satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is excellent and their cultural development is very strong. Christian values thoroughly permeate the school. Good evidence of students' enjoyment includes their well above average attendance and good punctuality to lessons. Attitudes to learning are very good. Behaviour in and around the school is excellent. Students are happy in school and say that they feel safe and secure and that the very few incidences of bullying or aggressive behaviour are dealt with rapidly by the staff. Students contribute well to the life of the school community and are developing good skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. The school promotes healthy lifestyles effectively through the food available and the many sporting activities, despite the limitations of its playing field accommodation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school accurately assessed its teaching and learning as being satisfactory. However, there is also some good and some outstanding teaching within the school. Where teaching is good, clear learning objectives are shared with the students and a range of appropriate learning strategies ensure that good pace is maintained. This retains the interest of students who enjoy their learning. Relationships are good and students behave well. There is effective use of information technology to support learning. In those lessons which are satisfactory the objectives are not shared sufficiently with students and the pace of learning is too slow to maintain the full interest of the students. In these lessons although students continue to behave well their enjoyment of learning is less evident and they make less progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. The school's specialist technology status ensures that almost all students take a technology subject to examination level. There is a clear stress on equal opportunities for all students from the beginning of Key Stage 3 onwards, but linked firmly to opportunities for some students to blossom early, for instance in music or in a second modern language. A wide range of pathways with an emphasis on vocational provision to enrich choice is a notable feature of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. There are negotiated packages for individual disaffected students and good programmes in place to support students with learning disabilities and those who are either gifted or talented. Evidence that the school's provision meets local needs includes the high retention rates in education, training and employment at 16 plus and post 18. The school recognises that it provides a less than ideal amount of time for physical education in Key Stage 4 and that some aspects of the provision for citizenship need improving, particularly its assessment. Extra-curricular provision is especially good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support overall are good. A very effective and well established pastoral care system is in place. It provides outstanding care and this is reflected in the good attitudes and well-being of students. Students facing particular difficulties spoke highly of the support they have received. Well established links with external agencies are in place at key points of transition.

The tracking of students' progress is increasingly rigorous, but is not yet being used consistently by all staff. It gives a clear picture of each student's achievement over time and allows pastoral leaders to identify which students are meeting or exceeding and which are failing to meet their challenging targets in particular subjects. Students spoken to about this were happier with the more recent traffic light monitoring system than they were with the established system of target levels. Students at risk of falling behind are monitored carefully and receive additional help and support.

The school takes child protection, safeguarding and other health and safety matters very seriously. The vetting of staff and procedures for ensuring the safety of students meet current government guidelines.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. A long-standing headteacher has retired recently and an interim senior management team is in place. This includes a number of temporary appointments and the team has not been in place for a sufficiently long period for its work to be fully embedded. However, senior leaders are committed to continuing to raise achievement and are beginning to make an impact. The self-evaluation of the school is accurate, but the involvement of all stakeholders in the process is not fully developed. The school has recently revised and improved its processes for faculty self-review. This system has not yet been applied to all areas. Self-review includes the monitoring of teaching and work scrutiny, but the implementation of these systems is not yet sufficiently consistent across the school. As a result these reviews and the annual review of performance data have not led to a sufficiently consistent approach to raising achievement and the role of middle managers in driving improvement is not consistently developed. The school is rightly involving the heads of house in monitoring academic progress, but this is a recent development and is not yet fully embedded. The governors are aware of the strengths and areas for development within the school. They have an effective structure of committees to fulfil their statutory duties. However, the governors are aware that the extent to which they evaluate progress requires further development and are taking action to address this.

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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?	3	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	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	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	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?	3	3
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?	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?	3	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	2	
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?	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

You may recall that I recently visited your school with a colleague to carry out a one day inspection. Thank you for the welcome you gave us and the politeness and courtesy you showed as we moved around the school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and listening to your views on the school.

We agree with your acting headteacher and her senior leadership team that your school is satisfactory overall. However, it has many strengths and you are right to be proud of the school.

We were particularly impressed by the high quality care that the staff provide for you. This clearly helps you to develop such positive attitudes to school. Your behaviour in and around school is excellent, you attend regularly and almost all of you seem to enjoy your lessons and to get on really well with each other and your teachers. We think that the range of courses you have available in the school, particularly when you get to Years 10 and 11, is very good. We were also impressed by the range of extra-curricular activities that are available to you.

You attain standards of work that are above those found in most schools, but you should be achieving even more in your examination courses. We have asked the staff to work with you to achieve this goal and to give you even more guidance on how to improve your work in all subjects. I am certain that you will continue to help them in this task through your hard work and good attitudes to learning.