



# Todmorden High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107564  
**Local Authority** Calderdale  
**Inspection number** 287855  
**Inspection dates** 1–2 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Josephine Nowacki HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Ewood Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Todmorden
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		Lancashire OL14 7DG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 813558
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	716	<b>Fax number</b>	01706 814821
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	101		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms Janet Hodge
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Botterill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 February 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	1–2 November 2006	287855

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Todmorden High School is slightly smaller than other comprehensive schools. Most of its students come from the immediate locality which is well below average in socio-economic terms. The majority of students are of White British origin and the percentage of students who do not speak English as their first language is low compared with the national average. The number of students identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than in similar schools. Approximately 5% of students have statements of special educational need which is above average. Attainment on entry to the school fluctuates from year to year, but generally it is slightly below average.

The school has had visual arts specialist status since 2003.

At the time of the inspection, interim arrangements for the school leadership team were in place following the departure of the previous headteacher in July 2006 and the arrival of the new headteacher in January 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Todmorden High School provides an adequate and improving education for its students aged 11 to 16. Standards have been low but are rising as a result of recent improvements brought about by the school's leaders, including better systems to tackle unacceptable behaviour. Students have responded positively and their parents and staff welcome this. Most students now make reasonable progress but a significant minority do not. Disruptive behaviour in a few classes and poor attendance are hampering the progress for some students. The quality of teaching is adequate overall but varies too much. Despite some good examples, too few lessons actively involve students in their own learning and there is little challenge, especially for the most able. The curriculum is satisfactory. The work-related courses for students in Years 10 and 11 are well matched to their needs and are proving popular and increasing motivation. The school is not yet developing students' basic skills in all subjects as well as it should. Arrangements for the setting of targets and monitoring of students' progress are new and where these have been established, they are helping to raise students' achievement.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, much of this recently. Senior leaders implemented improvements to practice, resulting in raising standards in examinations and in behaviour. However, the analysis of data as a basis of measuring whole school performance and setting targets is insufficiently rigorous at all levels of management. The school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve because senior leaders are identifying weaknesses and taking actions which are having a positive impact, particularly on standards and behaviour.

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in two respects: attendance and sixth form provision, is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 4

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are inadequate. Although pass rates are high in some subjects, value added data show that most students do not make adequate progress when compared with their prior attainment at the end of Year 11. The exceptions to this are GCE A-level art and design and graphics where students achieve consistently well. The number of students who remain on the second year of advanced courses is low. Teaching is adequate but many lessons are dominated too much by the teacher and so do not allow sufficient opportunities for independent learning and research. The curriculum is satisfactory even though the comparatively small number of students means that providing a full range of courses that meet students' requirements is not always possible. Care, guidance and support in the sixth form are inadequate because the process of setting students' targets and monitoring their

progress and attendance lacks rigour. Current arrangements do not motivate or challenge students and do not help them understand how to improve. Leadership and management of the sixth form are inadequate: the focus on improving standards and behaviour in the main school has been a priority and the result is that insufficient attention has been paid to the leadership of the sixth form.

Students enjoy being in the sixth form and they appreciate the help they get from their tutors.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Conduct a review of sixth form provision so that it better meets the needs of students.
- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in order to raise standards in the classroom and improve achievement.
- Improve the attendance, behaviour and attitudes to learning of a significant minority of students.
- Use data more effectively in the day-to-day work of the school, particularly to monitor and evaluate the impact of its actions to bring about improvement, and to inform planning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 4**

Standards and achievement were inadequate in 2005. However, intervention strategies and interim senior management arrangements have ensured significant improvements. Achievement and standards are now satisfactory: results in public tests and examinations in 2006 have improved and the work produced by students shows they are making progress. The majority of the students enter the school in Year 7 having achieved standards that are slightly below the national average. By the end of Year 9, standards are close to or above national averages. In the 2006 tests, progress in English was satisfactory and progress in mathematics and science was good. By the end of Year 11, students have made satisfactory progress, although the proportion obtaining the equivalent of 5 or more GCSE passes at grade C or above remains below the national average. There are also variations between subjects. Results in double award science, physical education and performance studies are below expectations. In art and design, media studies and design technology, students achieve well and make good progress. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and also make satisfactory progress. Boys perform less well than girls but the gap between them is narrowing. The most able students do not always maximise their potential and the school is beginning to address this through gifted and talented programmes.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students told inspectors that they like coming to school and that they feel safe and secure. They enjoy taking part in the many sporting activities provided by the school and believe that the exercise, along with the improved school meals, means that they are adopting healthier practices. Attendance in the main school and the sixth form is low in comparison with other schools and is inadequate. While the younger students attend well, the poor attendance of a significant number of those in Years 10 and 11 has an adverse effect on their progress.

The school is working hard to improve standards of behaviour and most students now behave well in lessons and around the school. However, a significant minority of students is still disrupting some lessons, meaning that they and their classmates do not progress as well as they should. There have been some incidents of racism. The school needs to improve its monitoring and recording of these to ensure that issues are dealt with promptly.

The school provides satisfactory opportunities for students to develop their social, moral and cultural awareness. This is reflected in the generally good relationships between students and staff and the contributions students make in the local community. An example is the work with local primary school children by students following the Junior Sports Leader Award. However, more needs to be done to improve students' spiritual development.

Personal and social education is effective in helping students develop many of the qualities needed for future economic well-being. Students are well supported in making decisions about future education and employment opportunities. However, the school does not place sufficient emphasis on developing basic skills.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In lessons where students' behaviour is well managed, progress is often good. Here students take responsibility for their work, enjoy it, are well organised and work well with others. However, many lessons are not better than satisfactory because there is too much talking by the teacher and the work given to students is often not challenging enough. A few lessons are subverted by poor behaviour and this hinders the learning of other students.

The school is taking good steps, including staff training, to improve the use of assessment for the setting of targets and monitoring the progress of individual students,

but the school recognises that more needs to be done to ensure greater consistency in practice across the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. Arts College status has led to the successful development of courses in arts and graphics, including a 'fast track' GCSE expressive arts course taken by Year 9 students. However, the impact of Arts College status on teaching and the curriculum in other subject areas is variable. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection. Key Stage 4 offers suitable courses for students of all abilities and aptitudes. The curriculum has been strengthened by the inclusion of work-related courses which have added breadth to the options already available to students in Years 10 and 11. Many students following these courses show improved motivation and interest as a result. However, there is no whole school approach to the development of students' basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Enrichment and extra curricular opportunities are satisfactory.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 4**

The quality of support which is given to students is satisfactory overall. Policies and procedures for safeguarding students are well established and understood by all staff. The school works well with outside agencies to support vulnerable students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and their progress is closely monitored.

The school's well established support for the care of students and its links with parents has been reinforced through the appointment of support staff to the roles of Pastoral Leader and Learning Mentor. Procedures for identifying those students whose attitudes and behaviour are having a negative effect on their own and others' learning have been strengthened, enabling support to be in place more quickly, although it is too soon to judge the impact of this. Tutorial provision is generally satisfactory, but not all tutors make effective use of tutorial time to promote and support the students' personal and academic development.

Good links with partner primary schools and a well-structured induction programme ensure that most pupils settle quickly and confidently into the life of the school. Students receive good advice as they progress through the school and in helping them make appropriate choices with regard to future education and career options.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

#### Grade for sixth form: 4

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The interim senior leadership team have worked quickly to maintain stability in the school and to restore staff morale which was low, particularly due to recent staff restructuring. Measures aimed at improving standards and achievement for all students have been implemented. The impact of these measures is already being seen in the improvement in standards in 2006. The school has recently sought the opinions of staff and students and this information is helping to shape the future direction of the school. Clear priorities have been established, aimed at gaining consistency of practice and providing staff with renewed optimism. Many students and teachers remarked how they like seeing the senior team around the school at break and lunch times. However, some important areas have not had sufficient attention and, as a result, overall school attendance and performance in the sixth form have declined. Many middle managers are beginning to gain confidence to share good practice and evaluate effectiveness of their own areas. The school knows itself quite well in many aspects of its work. Importantly, the current senior leaders recognise that there is variation in the skills of subject leaders and other middle managers and this has delayed the speed and efficiency in implementing some school policies and procedures. For example, the use of data for monitoring and evaluation of performance is not yet sufficiently robust at all levels.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive, strongly committed to the school and have a renewed sense of purpose and determination to hold the school to account.

Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation indicates that senior leaders are aware that the school needs to implement further changes to achieve even greater improvements. It is only recently that some significant issues have begun to be tackled, but much has been accomplished in a short time.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	No

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	4	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	3	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	4

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	4
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	4
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**

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school. We appreciated the time many of you gave to talk with us and to let us know your views. The purpose of our visit was to find out what your school does well and the areas that need to improve. We found that the education you receive at your school is satisfactory overall.

These are our main findings.

- Most of you make satisfactory progress but the school is working hard to ensure that you do even better than this.
- Many of you behave quite well both in lessons and around school, but some of you don't. We've asked the school to continue to set high standards of behaviour and ensure that all staff use the procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- Your attendance and punctuality are good in Years 7, 8 and 9. However, in Years 10 and 11 they are not good enough and this is stopping some of you from making good progress. Your attendance needs to improve and we have asked the school to monitor this more closely.
- Your teachers work really hard to help you succeed and you said how much you appreciate the help you receive from them, but we found that some lessons did not give you enough to do. We've asked the school to make sure that all lessons have a good variety of work for you to do to keep you motivated.
- Not all of you know what your targets are and what you need to do to reach them. We have asked the school to share your targets with you and tell you how you are doing more often.
- The sixth form is not good enough in ensuring all students achieve their potential. We have asked the school to make big improvements so that you all succeed as well as you should.

We wish you success in working with your teachers to help the school continue to improve.