



Cockburn High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108065
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 288018
Inspection dates 9–10 October 2006
Reporting inspector Joan McKenna

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Parkside
School category	Community		Gipsy Lane, Leeds
Age range of pupils	11–16		West Yorkshire LS11 5TT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2707451
Number on roll (school)	1079	Fax number	0113 2761853
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Westwell
		Headteacher	Mr Colin Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	9–10 October 2006	288018

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size school situated in an area with higher than usual levels of deprivation. Around a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the national average, as are the proportions who are from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language. There are 31 children from refugee or asylum seeker families, seven from traveller families of Irish or Roma heritage and 27 pupils are in public care. These figures are higher than typically found. The school gained specialist status in performing arts in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement, the standards they attain and their attendance. Because of these weaknesses, the effectiveness of the school is inadequate.

Pupils enter the school with below average attainment and they leave with exceptionally low standards. This represents inadequate progress. In 2005 only a third of pupils gained five or more GCSEs at grade C or above, and only a fifth gained C grades in English and mathematics. Standards in these subjects are too low. Almost a quarter of pupils did not gain five or more grades at G or above and over a tenth left with no qualifications at all. The achievement of this group of pupils over their time in school was amongst the poorest in the country. Provisional results for 2006 show a similar picture. Pupils' achievement from when they enter the school until when they leave is inadequate. However, there are signs of improvement. Standards have risen in recent years at Key Stage 3 and pupils' achievement at that key stage is now satisfactory. Although standards at Key Stage 4 are still too low, they have nevertheless risen over the past few years from an even lower level. Many pupils, especially the more able, are currently making satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11 from where they were at the end of Year 9, but overall pupils are not progressing at a rate that compensates for their earlier underachievement in the school. Pupils' attendance is also inadequate; it has been under 90% for the past few years. There are early signs of improvement so far this term, but in Years 10 and 11 attendance is still only around 90%.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders are very committed to the pupils and are taking a wide range of actions to improve the school for them. High quality care is provided to help meet pupils' personal needs, with outstanding support for particularly vulnerable pupils. This helps keep many involved in their learning. Pupils generally feel safe and well looked after within school. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum has been redesigned to extend the ways in which the needs of different groups of pupils in both key stages will be catered for. This is resulting in improvements, especially at Key Stage 3, although is not yet successfully engaging all pupils at Key Stage 4. The school's specialist arts status is having a positive impact. Senior leaders have ensured a consistent approach to planning the content and structure of lessons. Many teachers manage to motivate pupils and ensure adequate progress in lessons but some are less successful in this. Most pupils have good relationships with staff and the recent approach to promoting positive discipline is resulting in fewer referrals for bad behaviour. The school is aware of its weaknesses but has too positive a view of its effectiveness. In its evaluations, it has focused more on actions being taken rather than whether they are having enough impact on the learning and achievement of all pupils. Nevertheless, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further, as demonstrated by the effect of the actions

already taken by senior leaders and by their clear commitment to improving the quality of education provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement by raising standards, especially for lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4, and in English and mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve pupils' attendance to at least satisfactory levels.
- Ensure that evaluation of the school's strategies for improvement focuses more closely upon their impact on the learning and achievement of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The standards that pupils reach by the time they leave the school at the age of 16 are exceptionally low. In 2005 they were significantly below the national figures on every measure, with 12% of pupils leaving with no qualifications at all. These results put the school in the lowest performing 5% of schools in the country for the achievement they enabled pupils to make during their time in school. The provisional examination results for 2006 are similar overall. Results on some measures have gone up slightly but others have gone down, or stayed the same. Less than a fifth of pupils now gain good grades in English and mathematics and almost a tenth still achieve no qualifications.

Pupils' achievement from when they enter the school until when they leave is inadequate. This is particularly the case for the less able pupils. Action the school is taking to improve pupils' achievement is bearing fruit although much more remains to be done. At Key Stage 3, although formal test results in English, mathematics and science are still significantly below the national average, they are improving and achievement in that key stage is satisfactory. There have been improvements at Key Stage 4, too. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has steadily increased, but results at the lower grades have not increased as steadily or as markedly. While many pupils – particularly the more able, those from minority ethnic groups and those with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities – are now achieving satisfactorily in this key stage, overall, pupils are not yet doing so at a rate that makes up for their legacy of earlier underachievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance rates have been very low, at 85%, 86% and 87% respectively over the past three years, and this has had a negative impact on pupils' achievement, especially at Key Stage 4. Recent measures adopted by the school, although resulting in early signs of improvement across all year groups, are still not ensuring adequate attendance in Years 10 and 11. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall but vary. Many pupils are well behaved and, when teaching is good, they show interest in their learning. Some show

additional commitment, such as the large group seen performing enthusiastically in the after-school rehearsal for the forthcoming musical production. However, some pupils exhibit unsatisfactory attitudes to learning and cause low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils generally are responding well to the recent approach to promoting positive behaviour. Pupils generally feel safe. Year 7 pupils say they have settled in well. Pupils have a good awareness of health issues. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, pupils' poor attendance and lack of qualifications in English and mathematics mean they are not well enough prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers work hard to overcome the unsatisfactory attitudes and lack of desire to learn demonstrated by a significant minority of pupils in some lessons but with a mixed degree of success. Many manage to motivate pupils, and by having clear expectations about how pupils should behave and work, create a climate within their lessons that enables pupils to make adequate progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils in such lessons are generally good. Where teaching is less successful teachers do not maintain the interest of pupils or challenge inappropriate attitudes sufficiently strongly and consequently pupils' response to their work is unsatisfactory. The impact of the school's efforts to improve teaching can be seen in the consistent and generally well detailed approach to planning and in the structure of lessons, where there are usually clear aims and a variety of tasks. The work undertaken by classes is generally appropriate for the ability of pupils but in some cases there is not a close match of work to the needs of individuals. Pupils receive information on their progress but teachers do not always give pupils enough detail about how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The introduction of different curriculum routes has been followed by considerable improvement at Key Stage 3. A wider range of courses and alternative provision is now offered at Key Stage 4 but the curriculum is not yet motivating all pupils to attend regularly and some pupils show only limited enthusiasm for important subjects they study. The school works with other organisations to extend opportunities for pupils. The school's specialist arts status is acting as a beneficial influence on the curriculum and is increasing pupils' enjoyment and progress in related subjects. For example, a special event re-enacting the battle of the Somme integrated drama, English and history studies, and resulted in a televised report of the school's efforts. Pupils confirm that they receive appropriate guidance on health, safety and their personal development. They appreciate the good variety of clubs and other activities available to them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places great emphasis on ensuring that pupils' diverse and often complex personal needs are met, and the care and support provided for them are of a very high standard. The pastoral and emotional support for those pupils identified as vulnerable or with very low self-esteem is outstanding. A wide range of support is offered to parents, and they are encouraged to work closely with the school in promoting their children's development. These efforts help keep many pupils more engaged with their learning than they might otherwise be. There are appropriate systems for child protection, staff vetting and health and safety. The teaching and learning coordinators and other staff monitor the academic progress of every pupil in the school carefully but this relatively new and sophisticated system has not yet had enough impact on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, senior leaders and staff are strongly committed to providing the best for pupils. The effectiveness of the senior team has recently been strengthened and middle leadership is being successfully developed. A wide range of action is being taken to improve the school. Performance is comprehensively monitored but evaluation, such as of the effectiveness of teaching, focuses too much on what is being done rather than judging the effect it is having on pupils' learning and achievement. The strategies currently used to bring about change are beginning to have a positive impact, but are not yet ensuring satisfactory achievement and attendance or high enough standards. In view of this the school has not made enough progress since the last inspection. The governors competently review performance data to monitor school operations but do not create enough opportunities find out for themselves how things are going. Resources are well managed but overall value for money is inadequate because the school is not effective.

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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?	4
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	4

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?	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
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	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to thank you for talking with us in interviews, around the school and in lessons. Your school is taking a lot of action to help you do better but you are not all attending and achieving as well as you could and so we have judged that significant improvement is required in these areas. This means that inspectors will come to visit the school again shortly to see if these important aspects of its work have improved.

What we judged to be positive about your school

- Your teachers and other adults care for you very well and they work hard to make sure that your personal needs are met.
- The school works closely with your parents and others to make sure you are well supported.
- Most of you have good relationships with each other and with teachers.
- You know how to keep healthy and enjoy the opportunities provided for you for sport.
- The school has adapted the curriculum to try to meet your needs better.
- Teachers plan your lessons in a consistent way and most give you interesting work.

What we have asked the school to do now to help it improve

The following areas are especially important. The school needs to:

- help you achieve better, especially those of you in Years 10 and 11 who find work difficult and in English and mathematics
- make sure that more of you attend school regularly
- make sure that the way the school checks how effectively it is being led focuses more closely on how you are learning and achieving.

You can help your teachers by attending school regularly and working hard for them. We wish you well in the future.