



Fallibroome High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111464
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288971
Inspection dates 29–30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Toft HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Priory Lane
School category	Foundation		Upton, Macclesfield
Age range of pupils	11–18		Cheshire SK10 4AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01625 827898
Number on roll (school)	1506	Fax number	01625 820051
Number on roll (6th form)	304		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Hipperson
		Headteacher	Mr P Rubery
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	29–30 November 2006	288971

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Fallibroome High School is a co-educational foundation comprehensive school with specialist status in the performing arts. Nearly all students are White British and three have English as a foreign language. The school serves the west of the town of Macclesfield and surrounding areas. Students come from a mix of mainly prosperous and some less advantaged areas. Their attainment on entry to the school is well above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low but it has recently increased on the closure of a local school which had a specialist unit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Fallibroome High is an outstandingly effective school. Students of all abilities have access to an exceptionally well constructed curriculum and varied range of extra-curricular activities, well supported by significant provision for the performing arts and sports. Partly as a result, academic excellence and outstanding levels of attainment are well complemented by extensive opportunities for personal development. Students are given highly personalised levels of care, guidance and support. They are also expected to take responsibility in the school and beyond it and many do so willingly. They cooperate very well with each other, within and between year groups, and leave as well-rounded individuals who are thoroughly prepared for the next phases of their lives. Behaviour and discipline are first rate. The vast majority of students enjoy their education, taking it very seriously, and those interviewed spoke very highly of the school and its staff. Not surprisingly, therefore, the school is very popular with parents and is held in high esteem in the community.

The forward-looking and determined headteacher provides excellent leadership and management. He is well supported by an effective leadership team and a capable and vigilant governing body which works vigorously to ensure that the school moves in the right direction. The teaching and support staff work in a highly professional and thoughtful way. This, combined with the school's considerable investment in high quality staff training and the strategic use of information and communication technology, has enabled the school to adopt and develop a range of highly effective teaching methods. Teaching and learning are unusually good and inspectors saw a high proportion of exemplary lessons. This success is well supported by sharply focused monitoring and the excellent range of performance data which is used routinely by managers and teachers to ensure that courses and staff achieve their aims. Students' work is generally very well marked but this good practice needs to be spread to all teachers.

The school makes a very significant contribution, both as a participant and leader, to educational developments which benefit both learners and teachers in the local community and further afield. Its national and international links bring a rich source of ideas for continuing improvement, a goal to which Fallibroome's managers and staff are firmly committed. It has developed considerably as a specialist school for the performing arts and has made extensive and judicious use of the opportunities which this status has conferred. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Current building work will further enhance the accommodation though parts of the building will remain cramped without further upgrading and the library is inadequate for a school of this size. The management of finances and resources together with the value for money given are excellent.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school prepares its students exceptionally well for the next stage in their learning and for the world outside. When they leave the sixth form they are mature, confident and discerning young adults. They attain very high standards in their advanced level studies and their achievement is outstanding in the vast majority of courses, although results in general studies have been less good recently. This apart, the generally high attainment is a result, not only of excellent teaching, but also of excellent care, support and guidance given to individual students and their very mature approach to their work. The wide range of courses meets their needs and aspirations very well. Very thorough careers guidance enables students to make informed choices about their studies in the sixth form and beyond. Personal development is outstanding. Students' attitudes towards their learning are excellent: they take every opportunity afforded to them in lessons to take responsibility for their own learning and play an active part in discussions and activities. They have excellent relationships with their teachers and with each other. Students play an important and enthusiastic role in school life through, for example, helping younger students and a wide range of community work. They are very influential in decision making through the sixth form forum of the Student Voice and have contributed to the development of the outstanding enrichment programme.

Leadership and management are excellent. Students' progress is tracked very closely and appropriate action taken to help all students achieve their best. The highly effective planning and development have at their heart the well-being and achievement of students. As a result retention rates are very high and the school is a popular choice with students from a wide area including some from the independent sector.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen students' attainment in external examinations in sixth form general studies.
- Develop further throughout the school the innovative teaching methods for strengthening students' learning.
- Bring library resources up to a level which is appropriate for a school of this size.
- Extend to all teachers the good practice in the marking of pupils' work which has already been developed in much of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Achievement and standards are outstanding. The school admits a full range of ability but most students enter with above average standards. Students of all levels of attainment, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. In 2006 results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and in the General Certificate of Secondary Education at the end of Year 11 were exceptionally high. This

pattern of strong achievement has been the norm since the previous inspection. The school sets demanding targets which the students reach consistently. Students' attainment has benefited from the school's performing arts specialist status. Standards are very high in music and drama. Very good standards in all aspects of literacy underpin the students' progress. Lesson observations and sampling of students' work show that those currently on roll are maintaining the strong progress of their predecessors.

In the sixth form students' achievement continues to be excellent. Results over recent years have been consistently high, although results in general studies fell in 2006 at A2 and AS levels of the General Certificate of Education. The school's rigorous tracking data shows that the students currently in Year 13 are making at least the expected progress towards their targets, with a significant proportion doing better than expected. The students develop outstandingly well as effective independent learners. This is aided by challenging teaching in which students are expected and enabled to think clearly for themselves.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding. Students are proud of their school and say that 'we are a great community'. They are very well motivated and very well behaved in lessons and around the school. Their enjoyment is shown in their good attendance. They get on exceptionally well with staff and with each other.

The school demonstrates very strong commitment to students' personal growth and to meeting the needs of the individual. For example, personal and social education programmes such as RESPECT and GO FOR IT help students to develop into well rounded individuals and equip them with skills and attitudes to support successful future achievement. They also develop very good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and benefit from regular exercise through physical education and dance lessons as well as the extensive extra-curricular provision.

The school encourages the students to formulate and express their views and to influence the way the school is run and how they are taught. It does this by collating their views from interviews, questionnaires on aspects of school life and through the school council. Students say that they value highly such opportunities which include assisting the school on special occasions, participating in assemblies, representing the school at local, national and international events, mentoring younger students, working in the community, raising money for charities in the UK and abroad and taking part in high quality school productions. Such experiences help students to develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school judges teaching and learning to be good but inspectors judge it to be outstanding. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and the vast majority were good: over half of those observed were exemplary. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of students. They are enthusiastic, motivating and engaging. Their teaching is vibrant and varied and they plan well for students at all levels of abilities. As a result all students including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good and often outstanding progress.

Students are aware of their target levels for attainment and are given clear advice on how to improve. However, despite much good practice there are some instances where the regularity and quality of written feedback and marking are not up to the generally high standard throughout the school.

The school plans well for a series of school-based, local and international staff training, including research carried out by teachers, designed to improve teaching and learning. As a result many teachers use a wide range of strategies to maximise students' involvement in their learning including assessment of their own progress. They help to develop the students' independent thinking skills as well as encouraging them to work cooperatively, for example through lively and well structured group work.

This staff development is also having an impact on the wider community, for example, the school shares its work on cooperative learning with its partner primary schools and schools elsewhere for which it has received much praise. The school has clear systems in place to monitor teaching and learning across the school and is committed to exploring ways to improve the quality of teaching and to deepen the quality of learning beyond focusing narrowly on examination success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school provides an outstanding range of opportunities for all students. Its status as a performing arts college adds a distinctive flavour to the taught curriculum by providing motivating and popular courses in dance, drama and music technology. There is a wide range of examination courses for those in the 14 to 16 age range including accredited off-site vocational courses. The 'Flex' programme gives well-targeted and effective support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A wide range of academic sixth form courses is enhanced by an excellent enrichment programme. The provision for extra curricular activities in the 11 to 16 part of the school is similarly excellent. The school's programme for personal, social and health education is outstanding. Students speak warmly about the quality of the educational

and leisure activities open to them. The publicly performed evening of dance seen during the inspection, for example, was most impressive and was organised with consummate professionalism.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support given to all students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are outstanding. Procedures to protect students are well established and safety checks are completed regularly. Risk assessments are well documented. Students are happy in school and they feel safe and secure. There is always someone whom they know about and to whom they can turn for help and the older students play a significant role in this. Transition arrangements are significantly enhanced by extensive cooperative work carried out with its partner primary schools. The tracking and prediction of students' progress are rigorous and give a clear picture of what each achieves over time. Effective actions are taken when it seems that students are not on course to reach their targets, with parents involved as necessary. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle through a wide range of physical activities is exemplary. Similarly outstanding are the opportunities students get to make a contribution to the well-being of their fellow students as well as the wider community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding and are exemplified by the positive culture of learning that pervades the school community. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and he is well supported by his deputy, leadership team and other senior colleagues. Morale is high amongst the staff. The leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is an explicit drive to raise achievement even further than it already is. The ongoing monitoring of performance leaves teachers in no doubt as to how well they are doing and the extensive professional development of staff is a key and clearly effective feature of the school's work. It is highly valued by them. Staff and resources are deployed very effectively. Communication with parents is very good and they have a very high opinion of the school, supporting it very well. The specialist arts status is having an extremely positive impact on students' performance. Governors, who are led by an experienced chairperson, support the school by challenging its managers and by not accepting second best. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities and hold the school to account for the standards attained. Members of staff are forward thinking and are working at the forefront of not one, but several, initiatives. These are having a positive impact on the school's own students and staff, as well as further afield, including within some of the town's schools. The school's underlying approach to learning, which is founded on responsibility and cooperation, is having a positive impact on provision in its partner

schools. Leaders are far from complacent. For example, pastoral structures have been reviewed recently in order to give every student even more effective personal support within this large school. Departments that do not achieve as they should are held accountable. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The issues identified as needing strengthening have both been tackled robustly. In addition, there has been a successful drive to re-focus the work of middle leaders. The school provides excellent value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	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	1	
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	1	

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?	1	1
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

After our visit to inspect your school I would like to tell you of our findings.

- Fallibroome High is an excellent school.
- All students are given a first rate education and are cared for and guided very well indeed.
- You work hard, behave sensibly and get on well with each other and the staff. As a result you achieve excellent standards both in subjects and activities.
- You are very proud to be students at this school and speak very highly of how it helps you to learn.
- We were very impressed with how well you speak and listen and how you develop the confidence to express your ideas clearly.
- Staff listen carefully to these ideas and often improve things for you as a result.
- You are given plenty of good advice on how to prepare for your future lives.
- The quality of teaching and the leadership of the headteacher and his managers are excellent.
- Staff and governors are always looking for ways to improve the school further.

Although the school is excellent overall, three improvements are needed.

- Improve examination results in sixth form general studies.
- Strengthen provision in the library.
- Ensure that the very good marking of your work which we saw in many lessons is carried out as well by all teachers.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you well for your future work and activities at Fallibroome.