



# Witton Park High School, Business and Enterprise College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119730  
**Local Authority** Blackburn with Darwen  
**Inspection number** 291520  
**Inspection dates** 14–15 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Margaret Farrow HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Buncer Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Blackburn, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		BB2 6TD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 264551
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1050	<b>Fax number</b>	01254 693699
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Malcolm Doherty
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gwen Onyon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Witton Park High School, Business and Enterprise College is situated in an area of significant deprivation with more than the average number of students entitled to free school meals and this number is rising. About a quarter of students come from minority ethnic groups. A similar number have a first language other than English and 103 of these are deemed to be in the early stages of English language acquisition. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. Following the resignation of the previous headteacher last summer, an acting headteacher has led the school. The school achieved Business and Enterprise specialist college status in 2004 and has been reaccredited with the Basic Skills accreditation three times. The school is subject to proposals for rebuilding under the local authority's Building Schools for the Future programme.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Witton Park is a good school. There is a feeling of optimism and the recently appointed acting headteacher and staff are rightly proud of the 'buzz' around the school. Leadership and management are good and the acting headteacher has already made her mark. The senior leadership team, staff, and governors alike are energised and committed to her vision to continue to improve practice and to raise standards so that all students can achieve their best. Evidence from this inspection indicates that all staff are involved in making it a reality. Improvements in learning and teaching, the developing use of data in the classroom and the more effective tracking of students' progress are contributing to this process, as is the determined and well directed work of the senior leadership team and the newly appointed learning directors for both key stages.

This is an inclusive school and students show tolerance and respect for each other, staff and visitors. Good steps are taken to ensure that all students are included into the life of the school and there is a wide range of out-of-school activities to meet individual interests and needs. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are supportive of the school and believe that their students are making good progress in their learning. Good relationships permeate the school and this approach has been extended to outside agencies that support the school, the business community, Connexions service and other schools within the local learning network. The specialist Business and Enterprise College status has enhanced the school's relationships with the business and wider community. In addition, opportunities for students to gain vocational qualifications in business and information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. The emphasis on enterprise and entrepreneurial skills helps to prepare them for their future lives.

Although standards are satisfactory overall, the progress of the majority of students is good when compared to similar students in comparable schools. Vulnerable students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at risk of being excluded access a good range of specific support to help them make progress in their learning. Students learning English as an additional language receive well targeted support and the majority make better progress than similar students in comparable schools.

Not all students are currently challenged to do the best they can and the school is aware of the need to improve the attainment of higher ability students. Although the school has a good range of data and information on individual students, this information is not being used well enough to provide all staff with a clear overview of the performance of students to promote better achievement throughout the school. The quality of marking is also variable. The best marking ensures that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve, but not all teachers take this approach. Challenging targets for students are being set and the school is aware of what needs to be done in relation to interlinking teaching and learning, target setting and tracking to ensure that all students achieve the best results possible. It is

well placed to continue to drive up standards and achievement and the leadership team's capacity to improve is good.

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

- Ensure lessons include challenging learning activities for all students, including higher achieving students.
- Improve the consistency and quality of marking to that of the best in the school so all students have a clear view of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the use of data to promote students' achievement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The achievement of students is good and they make good progress given their starting points and in comparison with those in similar schools. Attainment on entry varies from year-to-year and ranges from broadly average to slightly below average. The standards which students attain are satisfactory. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11, students achieve standards which are broadly in line with national averages. The proportion achieving five good GCSEs and five A\* to G is slightly higher than that found nationally. There are however, fluctuations in performance between subjects and key stages. For example, there are fewer students than expected achieving the higher levels in national tests at the age of 14 and A\*/A grades in GCSE examinations at the age of 16. As a result, not all students are achieving the best they can. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the good support and guidance they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Underachievement is being identified at an early stage and an appropriate range of support strategies are in place to deal with this.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development of the students, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and reflective of the cultural diversity within the school. The majority of students enjoy school, are willing to learn and behave well in class. Behaviour in other areas during break and lunchtime is sometimes boisterous. Students say they feel safe in school and free from harassment. They report that bullying and racist incidents are unusual and when they occur, they are dealt with well by staff. Good strategies developed by the school to improve behaviour are reducing the numbers of students who are either temporarily or permanently excluded. Because of the good actions of the school, attendance is improving slightly year-on-year, although it remains below the national average. Students know how to be safe in lessons and around school and adopt healthy lifestyles by participating in the good range of sporting activities and the school's good Healthy School programme. Many students make a good contribution to school life and they welcome opportunities to take

responsibility, for example acting as peer mediators, receptionists, or by serving on the School Forum. An extensive range of opportunities in subjects across the school and in the wider community enable students to take initiative and develop skills that will equip them for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Relationships between staff and students are positive and supportive. Lessons are often characterised by good humour and well-deserved praise so most students enjoy learning and grow in self-confidence. Teachers have a good understanding of how best to teach their subjects, give clear explanations and plan well staged steps in learning that help most students make good progress. ICT is often used well in lessons to support learning. Many students understand how best they learn and teachers include a good variety of stimulating activities in lessons to match students' learning needs. Students have individual learning targets in every subject and some find them very helpful. However, when they are not referred to often enough in lessons, they are less helpful and some students forget them. The progress of students is tracked closely and in many lessons teachers use assessment information to plan activities that matches students' differing abilities. This practice is not yet consistently good and there are some lessons where higher attaining students are not fully challenged. Students' work is marked regularly but it does not always give students useful guidance on what to do to improve and students are not always required to act upon the advice.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provided is good and is being continually reviewed and adapted to meet the needs of students. The arrangements for supporting groups of more vulnerable students, lower attaining students and those at risk of losing interest in their education are successful. Students who need additional support for basic skills in Key Stage 3 feel safe and secure and are making good progress. Good alternative arrangements in Key Stage 4 have led to increased attendance, achievement and self-esteem of students attending. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are well taught, so students are getting a good start for their futures. The school's specialist status has led to a broadening of learning experiences for students. The vast majority have the opportunity to gain vocational qualifications in business and ICT. The school provides an increasing number of vocational opportunities that link well to post-16 opportunities locally and there are plans to develop these further. Many students enjoy following their interests, especially in sport, and enhancing their academic progress through taking part in an impressive range of extra activities and clubs. The time allocated to teaching personal, social and health education, citizenship and religious education is limited, especially in Key Stage 4.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school is strongly committed to students' well-being and the care, guidance and support provided is good. Students believe that staff are approachable and they appreciate the help and support they receive. All necessary procedures for health and safety are in place and risk assessments are rigorous. Procedures for safeguarding students meet current government requirements. Transition arrangements are good. Students starting school in Year 7 are well supported. The school provides good quality guidance and support to students in Year 9 in preparation for choosing GCSE subject options and for those in Year 11 moving on to work and further education. This includes good careers advice and contributions from Connexions and other agencies. Parents and carers are kept well informed of their child's progress and the recent addition of Raising Achievement evenings supports this process. Systems are in place to set pupil targets and check progress. As yet, this is not fully implemented across the school and not all students understand their grades or how to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The acting headteacher is ably supported by her dedicated leadership team, who have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and priorities for improvement. The school is building on improvements made over recent years, as is seen by the good progress students make in their learning by the time they leave school. Self-evaluation processes are effective and extend into faculties and teams. Information gathered informs faculty planning and is increasingly influencing whole school priorities within the school improvement plan. The school is aware of the need to develop improvement planning further to ensure that all knowledge of student performance informs clear actions and targets for improvement. Performance management arrangements are good. Staff and middle leaders understand what is expected of them, feel empowered to take decisions, and are accountable for the performance in their areas of responsibility. Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching by the leadership team is effective; they have an accurate view of its quality. The quality of teaching is enhanced by the many opportunities to share best practice within and beyond the school. The governing body has recently been reconstituted to carry out a more focused role. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses through close liaison with faculties and they challenge when necessary. The school provides good value for money and improved financial management arrangements are in place.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
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?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Students

Witton Park High School, Business and Enterprise College

Buncer Lane

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB2 6TD

14 November 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome you gave us during our two day visit. I would also like you to thank all of the parents who wrote to us; we had over 100 letters. I was pleased to see that the majority of parents who wrote are very supportive of the school and believe that you are making good progress in your learning. The team enjoyed talking with you and we were pleased to see that most of you enjoy school and the wide range of activities you can attend after the school day. When visiting lessons we saw that the majority of you behaved, worked well and made good progress in your subjects. We do think however, some of you could do even better.

We think Witton Park is a good school. We saw that staff care for you well and offer good guidance and support. Your new acting headteacher is working hard with her staff to help you to achieve good results in your examinations and tests and make good progress in your learning. We were pleased to see the good relationships you have with other students and with teaching and teaching support staff. We saw many examples where students were helping and supporting each other in their learning. Many of you also helped us to find the way round your split site school. We could see that the Business Enterprise College is improving the opportunities for you to gain vocational qualifications in business and ICT, as well as providing many other activities to help you get good careers when you leave school. We found that most teachers plan and manage your lessons well and try to make them exciting to help you learn. They also aim to match lessons to your individual learning styles and provide targets to help you know what you need to learn and what you need do to improve and make sure you do not forget them. We also saw some good marking that lets you know whether you have done well and what else you could do. We have asked the school to make sure:

- the marking of your work is as good as the best
- lessons include challenging learning activities for all students including those of you who could achieve higher results
- staff use all of the information they have about your progress in lessons and tests to help their planning of your work so that you all can achieve your best.

Once again, thank you for welcoming us so well. The inspection team and I wish you all the best in your future lives.

Margaret Farrow HMI

Lead Inspector