



# Penwortham Girls' High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119765  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291537  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Michael Maddison 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>   | Cop Lane             |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community          |                         | Penwortham, Preston  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 11–16              |                         | Lancashire, PR1 0SR  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Girls              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 01772 743399         |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 754                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 01772 752475         |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Mr Charlie Hooper    |
|   |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Mrs Joan Fitz-Gibbon |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 1 March 2001       |                         |                      |

|                           |   |                                    |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b><br>11–16 | <b>Inspection dates</b><br>24–25 January 2007 | <b>Inspection number</b><br>291537 |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Penwortham Girls' High School takes students of all abilities from the South Ribble area and the City of Preston. The students come from over 40 primary schools. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is also below the national average, as is the proportion of those with statements of special educational needs. About a quarter of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds, principally from families of Indian heritage. Very few students have English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Penwortham Girls' High School is a good school. It offers a high quality of education and care and provides an environment which successfully promotes academic achievement and personal development.

Achievement is good and standards are above the national averages at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The proportion of students achieving A\* to A grades in the GCSE examinations in 2006, for example, is twice the national average. These good results are the consequence of effective teaching and of students' strong commitment to learning and their desire to succeed. Lessons are well organised and taught and teachers plan learning so that the students make good progress. However, teaching is not yet outstanding because there is some inconsistency and in particular because not all students are given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum is satisfactory, but does not fully meet the needs of all the students, especially those who are low attainers and who are less well motivated by traditional courses.

The personal development of the students is good, as is the care, guidance and support they receive. They behave well and are tolerant of and respectful to each other. They enjoy coming to school and they feel safe here. They make positive contributions to the life of the school and the local community and they participate in a good range of high quality extra-curricular activities. Students are given opportunities throughout the school to take responsibility and these experiences, such as acting as peer counsellors, reinforce their personal development and help them to develop skills for their future lives. The students are very supportive of their school and so are the great majority of parents. The pastoral care of the students is very good, especially that for the vulnerable students. There are very productive links with post-16 providers, and students receive very good guidance about their options after GCSE. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are particularly well catered for.

The headteacher is supported well by her dedicated leadership team; all leaders and managers share a strong commitment to the school. The school evaluates itself accurately and is aware that management roles and responsibilities need to be clearer. It has good capacity to improve, though, because school leaders at all levels demonstrate a good understanding of future priorities and exhibit the drive and determination needed to support future progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning to ensure that all students are able to take greater responsibility for their learning.
- Continue the development of the curriculum to ensure that the needs of all students are met.
- Make management roles and responsibilities clearer.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The achievement of students is good. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is slightly above average. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 and public examinations at the end of Year 11 show that students make good progress in both key stages. The standards reached by students at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE have been above the national average for several years. In 2006, the school was disappointed that the proportion of students achieving five A\* to C grades was slightly below its target, but results remained above the national average. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is well above the national average, and the proportion of students achieving A\* to A grades in the GCSE examinations at 16 is twice the national average. These good results are the consequence of good teaching and because the vast majority of girls have positive attitudes to their studies and strive to achieve the best results. Students from minority ethnic groups do well, especially those of Indian heritage. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities also achieve well. This is because of the good support and guidance they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Through its own self-evaluation, the school has identified the performance of middle to low attaining students as a concern. To ensure these students make appropriate progress, a number of measures, including changes to the curriculum, are being introduced to raise their standards.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their progress in understanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues is also good. This is the result of the effectively planned activities they experience in such subjects as English, religious education and music, as well as in citizenship lessons. It is also due to assemblies which promote the school's positive ethos. Students enjoy school, work hard, and are keen to learn. Their positive attitudes to learning underpin their good achievement and progress. Students get on well with each other and with staff; the school is a friendly and well ordered community. Students are responding positively to the school's clear expectations, and this is seen in their good behaviour in lessons and around school and in their attendance, which is slightly above the national average. They are confident that there are adults they can turn to for help with any problems that arise and this helps to reinforce their positive attitudes.

The well planned programme for personal, social and health education helps students to develop a clear understanding of such health-related issues as drugs awareness and sex education. Although the time allocated to physical education is not generous, many students benefit from regular exercise through their participation in physical education and extra-curricular sports. The students value the good range of opportunities they have to help others, and their support of charities and engagement in fundraising activities enables them to take initiative and develop skills, which will equip them for their future lives. They willingly play an active part in the life of the

school, for example, as form and sports leaders, peer counsellors, or as members of the Year 11 duty team; these experiences help them to grow in maturity and self-confidence. The school council represents the views of students well and it has effectively brought about improvements, such as the access to water in lessons and revisions to the kit requirements for physical education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and enable students to achieve well in reaching high standards. Lessons are well organised, involve challenging and varied activities and proceed at a good pace. Teachers have a good understanding of how best to teach their subjects, give clear explanations and plan well staged steps in learning that help students make good progress. Work is marked and students receive useful guidance, which supports their learning. Written comments commonly indicate the standard attained, what has been done well and what could be improved. The progress of students is closely checked and in many lessons teachers use assessment information to plan activities that match students' differing abilities. Students know what they are expected to learn and generally respond in lessons with enthusiasm and with commitment. They take great care with their written and practical work, they work collaboratively in groups and they form good relationships with teachers. Although most teaching is good, it is not yet consistently outstanding throughout the school because not all students are given sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and it meets statutory requirements. The school has started to adapt the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to make it more flexible and more responsive to individual needs. A wider choice of subjects and qualifications is being developed through links with a local college and within a schools' cluster. These are intended to cater more directly for those students who are less well motivated by traditional courses. External courses are monitored and students' attendance is checked.

Support in class is good for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those who have English as an additional language. The curriculum is extended to enable higher attaining students to take additional courses, including GCSE statistics. There is a good variety of enrichment activities and events, which encourage students' enjoyment and promote their well-being. Students have increasing opportunities to develop skills for their future economic well-being through a well planned and delivered series of enterprise activities, which extend work-related learning and support the good careers programme. The developments in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 are

appropriate. They are in their early stages and the impact of the revision made so far has yet to be fully evaluated.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. There is a high level of commitment and concern for safeguarding the welfare of students. Procedures for child protection are understood by staff. All health and safety requirements are met; systems for risk assessment, including those for out of school visits, are thorough and managed carefully. Students are very well known to staff, and they say they feel safe and cared for. They trust adults to take their concerns seriously and value the steps taken by the school to deal with issues such as bullying, should they arise. On the whole, parents are very happy with the quality of education the school offers and they, and their children, appreciate the care provided by school staff.

Support for vulnerable students, including looked-after children, and for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is both sensitive and effective. Links with outside agencies to provide help for individual students is good. The systems for tracking their progress are exemplary and play an important part in the good progress made by these students. Strong links with primary schools smooth the transfer of students into Year 7. A well planned careers education programme helps to guide students as they move through the school. Older students receive useful guidance about their subject choices in Year 9 and when considering post-16 courses and future careers.

Procedures for setting students' academic and personal targets are satisfactory. Recent changes to the organisation of pastoral support have strengthened the checks on students' progress towards their targets and are beginning to help them take more responsibility for their learning. However, this is not yet consistent practice across the school. Students are encouraged to achieve well. Those likely to do less well than they should, particularly in Years 10 and 11, are identified and additional support is being provided to help them achieve the best grades possible.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership at all levels is good. As a result, the school successfully focuses on promoting achievement and personal development. The headteacher has set a clear vision for an inclusive school in which all students are valued equally. Staff morale is high and this helps to foster the positive atmosphere throughout the school in which good learning takes place. The roles of a restructured and expanded senior team are matched to achieving the school's strategic aims, with a strong focus on ensuring the best care for all aspects of students' welfare. Subject leaders accurately evaluate the work of their departments. They use assessment data effectively to monitor students' progress and identify and support those students who are at risk of underachieving. Leaders and managers recognise that they will be held to account for their performance but they are not as efficient as they could be because management roles and responsibilities

are not clear. As a result, progress in adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of all students has been slow.

The school has developed comprehensive systems for self-evaluation and they have linked the outcomes of these reviews to school development priorities. As a result, the school improvement plan accurately identifies key areas for development and suggests appropriate strategies for delivery. The school has tackled, with some success, issues arising from the previous inspection regarding the use of ICT and the provision for gifted and talented students. It has also implemented effective strategies to improve behaviour and reduce unauthorised absence. Governors are supportive but do not do enough to challenge the school. They are committed, though, to securing the school's future by building on its reputation for promoting traditional values in a modern, high quality single-sex setting. Day-to-day management is effective and the school runs very smoothly. Sound financial management ensures staff and resources are well deployed and the school gives good 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | <b>School Overall</b> |
|---|-----------------------|

### 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   | 2 |
| 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   | 3 |
| 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> | 3 |
| <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

Penwortham Girls' High School

Cop Lane

Penwortham

Preston

Lancashire

PR1 0SR

26 January 2007

Dear Students

As you are all aware I led the team of inspectors which recently visited your school and, on behalf of the team, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. We greatly appreciated the time you spent talking to us and we found your comments very helpful. As well as coming into lessons and looking at your work, we read the questionnaires completed by your parents. Like you they were very supportive of the school.

We think that you receive a good education at Penwortham Girls' High School. The school is generally well run and it has many strengths.

- You enjoy coming to school, you achieve good results in national tests and examinations and you make good progress.
- You are well behaved in lessons and around the school.
- You have good attitudes to learning and are eager to do well.
- You make the most of the good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Your teachers work hard on your behalf. And you respond well, most of the time!

You are working at a standard that is well above average but we think you could do even better. We have asked the headteacher, the staff and the governors to help you achieve higher standards by making sure that:

- you are given the opportunity to take more responsibility for your own learning
- the curriculum opportunities on offer in Years 10 and 11 are improved to give you a much wider choice of subjects and courses.

It is not just up to your teachers, though, for you have your part to play! We want you to aim high, to listen to their advice and always try to improve.

We very much enjoyed visiting your school. I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools