



Chesterton Community High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124411
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292988
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Castle Street
School category	Community		Chesterton
Age range of pupils	11–16		Newcastle ST5 7LP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 296500
Number on roll (school)	482	Fax number	01782 561978
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	M J Dolman
		Headteacher	Lynn Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	8–9 November 2006	292988

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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

Chesterton Community Sports College is an 11 to 16 school of well below average size. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a much lower proportion than the national average. The school is in its first term of having specialist sports status. There is a multi-agency centre on site subsidised by the school.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to boys' achievement in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4.

The school brought about a good improvement in its overall examination results in 2006. The proportion of students achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C is now close to the national average. However, this overall pattern of improvement is inconsistent and masks boys' poor progress in English and mathematics. Whilst boys and girls now make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science this is not the case at Key Stage 4. The proportion of boys achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is exceptionally low and has been for two years. Girls on the other hand make satisfactory progress. Around five times as many girls as boys achieve at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. This is a huge difference. English and mathematics are subjects crucial to the future economic well-being of all pupils and so overall achievement and standards are judged to be inadequate.

The school has prioritised making its accommodation attractive, warm and welcoming. Students appreciate this and the facilities are treated responsibly. Students enjoy school. They feel safe and good advice is available on mental and physical health from the multi-agency centre. There are good opportunities for students to contribute to their community through charity work and by taking on extra responsibilities as a prefect. Students have a good range of courses and after school activities from which to choose. Attendance is improving. In some subjects students are well engaged by the tasks they are given to do and make good progress. In other lessons, tasks are undemanding and the pace slow. In such lessons teachers have to work hard to motivate students to complete the work set. Students' work is checked by teachers, but only in some lessons is assessment well used to provide students with guidance on how they can improve. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The headteacher is aware of where strengths exist and is taking action to improve weaknesses such as the inconsistent use of assessment.

Leadership and management of the school were restructured at the start of this term. The newly established senior leadership team has moved quickly to set out an agenda for improving the school. Until recently the school did not monitor the progress made by students well enough. It failed to recognise the extent of underachievement amongst boys and has consequently failed to take swift and effective action. A good system for tracking the academic progress of all students has now been implemented. The improvements that have already been brought about in overall examination results and attendance attest to the school's good capacity to continue to improve itself.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of boys in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 by supporting those identified as underachieving in catching up.
- Ensure the consistent use of assessment to provide students with guidance on how to improve in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate. Standards in national tests overall in 2006 improved markedly on the results for 2005. The proportion of students achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C increased from 30% in 2005 to 54% to be just below the national average. Good improvements were also made in the results of the Year 9 national tests. Overall standards are now broadly average. However, these overall results conceal a very large difference in the relative performance of boys and girls. In 2006, girls did well with 64% of them achieving at least five GCSEs at grades A* to C. The comparable figure for boys is much lower at 38%. The difference is even more pronounced in the important subjects of English and mathematics. Girls do three times better than boys in English and twice as well in mathematics. Only 6% of boys achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. Although there was a marginal improvement from 2005 on this measure, this is still an exceptionally low outcome.

The prior attainment of students joining the school varies between broadly average and below average. Boys have lower standards than girls at this point. By the end of year 11 most girls expected to achieve an A* to C grade in English do so; however, less than a third of boys do. In mathematics the proportion falls to only one in five boys. Considering their starting points, boys make inadequate progress in English and mathematics. Progress is better in other subjects, which is why the overall examination results for 2006 have improved.

The school follows national guidance on setting targets based on prior attainment. The school exceeded its statutory targets for 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory with some good features. Behaviour is satisfactory. Students are well managed and as a result there are few exclusions. Students speak positively of the rewards system. Attendance levels have improved since the last inspection and are now in line with the national average. Students enjoy school. They feel safe and well supported. Students are confident that they can seek advice and that any problems will be dealt with effectively. Their awareness of health and safety issues is good. Most students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle and particularly appreciate the excellent sporting facilities available in the school. Students take advantage of the wide range of opportunities for their

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is good. Many participate in the wide range of different activities and other social and cultural events such as drama clubs and themed days.

The school council is very active. Students feel they are listened to well. They welcome the opportunities they have to play an active part in decision making. Students take responsibility, notably as prefects, and contribute both to the school and the wider community. They work hard for various local and national charities, often on their own initiative. Careers education and work experience ensure that students have an insight into the world of work. However, inadequate achievement in English and mathematics, particularly for boys, limits their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in some subjects. In the best lessons seen, good planning and a brisk pace ensured students made good progress. In these lessons students learn to assess their work themselves. They understood the level or grade at which they were working and what their targets were. In lessons that were satisfactory, factual understanding was checked but students were insufficiently challenged to work independently, or investigate ideas for themselves. Pace in these lessons was slow and the expectations of students low. The use of assessment is inconsistent across the school so that in some subjects students do not receive clear guidance about how to improve their work. Teachers sometimes had to work hard to engage boys and to ensure they completed the tasks set. In a minority of lessons, boys' written work showed a lack of care and was incomplete. In many lessons good emphasis on key words helped students to understand important ideas. Although there was little evidence of individual education plans informing lesson planning, teaching assistants ensured those with learning difficulties and disabilities made satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students. In Years 7 to 9 time has been found for additional lessons to boost students' reading and writing skills, leading to better attainment. In Years 10 and 11 a good range of vocational courses is available to students through partnerships with local colleges. More able students are entered early for GCSE English in Year 10 and there are plans to extend this to mathematics in the future. The most able Year 11 students appreciate the AS-level courses they are able to access in subjects such as design and technology, and French. Specialist sports college status and excellent developments in the area of community education have increased the range of lunch time and after school activities, of which there is

good take-up. Over 80 students auditioned for parts in the next school production with others volunteering for backstage roles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Procedures for ensuring the safety of students are well implemented. Monitoring of behaviour is good. Students say that any incidents are dealt with well as the school is keen to ensure their well-being and success. Tutors and heads of year care for students well and ensure their successes are shared, celebrated and rewarded. The multi-agency centre provides a wide range of advisory services and is a strength of the school.

Despite these positive features, care, guidance and support are inadequate because, until only very recently, the school failed to monitor effectively its provision and the progress of students. A group of older students attending a local college substantially underachieved in 2005 because they were entered for an inappropriate qualification and because no-one was checking that all were attending. Since then a member of staff has accompanied students accessing courses at the college to make sure this does not happen again. The school has not recognised the extent of serious underachievement among boys over the past two years. Consequently, it has failed to act with sufficient urgency in implementing strategies to help boys catch up. The recently created leadership team has quickly implemented good systems to monitor the progress made by all students. The school can now accurately identify students requiring extra support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some strengths. The strong leadership and vision of the headteacher are shared by the newly formed senior leadership team. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork and all staff are encouraged to play an active role in college development. Staff feel valued by the headteacher and accordingly work hard. The school has taken steps to ensure the staff have an acceptable work/life balance.

The good quality of the senior leadership team has brought about good improvements in overall examination results. Attendance has improved and the school was successful last term in being awarded specialist sports status. However, despite these improvements, the school did not move swiftly enough to identify and monitor the underachievement of boys. This deficiency has now been rectified and actions are being taken to help boys achieve as well as girls. The school now has a sound view of its strengths and weaknesses. Governance is good. Governors carry out their roles of monitoring and challenging the school to improve well. The governors are aware of and concerned about boys' underachievement in English and mathematics.

Subject leaders have had appropriate training in developing their capacity to monitor and improve teaching. They have begun to encourage new ways of teaching and

collaborating. At present, good practice, such as in the use of assessment, is not effectively shared between subject teams. Subject leadership overall is satisfactory. Equality of opportunity is promoted and any discrimination tackled. Procedures for safeguarding students are good and meet government requirements.

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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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	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
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank those of you we spoke to and the school council for the friendly welcome you gave us. Your responses to our questions helped us decide what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. There are some strengths to the education you receive at your school, but a number of areas require improvement.

These are the strengths of your school:

- You enjoy coming to school because you feel safe there.
- You get good advice from the multi-agency centre.
- The choice of courses available to you and the range of after school activities are good.
- Overall examination results have improved.
- Your governors, headteacher and senior staff are good at helping the school to get better.

There are two aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. The progress made by boys at Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics is inadequate. The girls are doing five times better in these important subjects! In some subjects, teachers assess your work well and give you good guidance on how to improve. We think this should happen in all subjects. I have asked your headteacher to improve the progress boys make in English and mathematics and to ensure assessment is good in all subjects. You can help by following the guidance you are given on how to improve. Inspectors will visit the school again to check on its progress.

I wish you every success in the future.