

Egerton High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131885
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	293876
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jeffery Plumb

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Eaton
Headteacher	Mrs Eloise Scroggie
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001
School address	Kingsway Park Urmston Manchester Lancashire M41 7FZ
Telephone number	0161 7497094
Fax number	0161 7497096

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Egerton High School makes day provision for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Over the past two years it has admitted an increased number of students with complex mental health difficulties and a few have additional difficulties such as autism and tourette's syndrome. All students have challenging behaviours associated with their needs and all have a statement for their special educational needs. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average. The number of students supported by the Youth Offending Service is high as is the number supported by the Child Adolescent Mental Health Service. There are a high number of children in public care on the school's roll. Twenty per cent of students are dual-registered (on the roll of a neighbouring high school as well as the roll of this school). The proportion of students from minority ethnic family backgrounds is small and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Boys significantly outnumber girls.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has decisive action plans to bring about improvement, some of which have already brought about improvements for students. Recent modifications to the curriculum, for example, are motivating students well and have resulted in a reduction in the number of fixed term exclusions. For a school supporting students with very complex behavioural difficulties, the number of exclusions is below that found typically. Many students turn over a new leaf in this school because as they say, 'Our teachers listen to us, and so we want to do well.' It offers very effective vocational education and some programmes such as film making and mixing sound in the music studio are outstanding. However, there are a few curriculum deficiencies. Key Stage 3 students do not get all of the design and technology subjects they are entitled to and Key Stage 4 students miss out on learning to speak a foreign language. The headteacher has steered this school through a difficult period of uncertainty as to where it fits in the local authority's strategy for special educational needs. It is now on a sound footing with good capacity to improve. Partnerships with industry and other high schools are strong and provide a wide range of opportunities for students to work alongside their mainstream peers. This builds their confidence. This academic year the school has been dogged by poor attendance, although it has worked with energy and commitment to drive it up. Achievement in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory overall, but it is marred by poor attendance. Teaching is satisfactory and improving, but not all teachers are yet sufficiently confident in using the school's assessment system to inform their lesson plans to raise achievement. Students in this school respond with enthusiasm to lessons taught using interactive whiteboards. Not all classrooms have these, but there is a funded plan to ensure that they will by the start of the next academic year.

Students' personal development is satisfactory overall, but there are good features. Students are well supported in adopting a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to keep fit through regular exercise and the meals provided are tasty and nutritious. Many students, despite their behavioural difficulties, have outstanding emotional intelligence and a deep commitment to treat poor people throughout the world fairly. The school cares for students very well. Guidance and support are satisfactory with good features. The school makes effective use of external agencies, such as the youth offending team and health professionals, where available. Since the last inspection the senior team has been restructured and their leadership is good. Their vision of a relevant curriculum to equip students for the world of work has been realized. In partnership with the support of the local authority they have created a 'can do' culture within the school. There is an expectation that students will do well in national tests and examinations and the number of GCSEs made available to them has increased significantly over the past two years. Governance is effective and senior leaders provide a clear sense of direction. However, some management systems are not sufficiently sharp and subject leaders vary in the skills they have to drive forward and improve the provision in their subjects. Overall therefore, leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance so that a higher number of students have the opportunity to achieve success than at present.
- Raise achievement in English, mathematics and science so that more students achieve well.

- Ensure that teaching improves so that a greater proportion is good or better and all teachers become confident in using the school's assessment system to inform their lesson plans to raise achievement.
- Ensure that Key Stage 3 students have the opportunity to follow a balanced design and technology curriculum and that the Key Stage 4 students are provided with the opportunity to learn a foreign language.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students make satisfactory progress throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. Overall, achievement is satisfactory but standards by Year 9 and Year 11 remain below the national average because of the significant gaps students have in their education before being admitted to this school. Poor attendance continues to have an adverse impact on achievement for some students. Good analysis of pupils' work enables teachers to focus on areas of weakness in students' knowledge and skills. This is used well to raise achievement, for example in data handling in mathematics and in writing. Students' performance in national tests for 14-year-olds shows a rising trend in mathematics and English. Science results show an up and down picture. The school works very hard to equip pupils to cope with examinations, but attendance for those tests towards the end of the examination period tends to be lower than at the start. GCSE results in 2006 were credible measured against students' low starting point and included, for the first time, a grade B pass in religious studies. Achievement in the expressive arts and art and design is good. Students have enjoyed a 100% pass rate at GCSE grades A to G in expressive arts over a three year period. Those who attend regularly make good progress in vocational courses and gain accreditation which provides a pathway to enter college or get jobs when they leave. The school is particularly successful at enabling students to engage with learning and be re-integrated back to mainstream high schools. These students, supported in sorting their lives out by this school, often go on and achieve GCSE results above the national average following re-integration to mainstream.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' behaviour is often challenging: that is why they are in this school. However, it is satisfactory overall. During the inspection students behaved well and expressed a mature attitude to life. For example, students have an acute awareness of inequality in the world. They said, 'We have decided to have a Fair Trade school uniform so that poor people get a decent wage.' The school excludes fewer students than the typical rates for similar schools. Those who attend regularly enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning. As they begin to believe in themselves they take off with their learning and are keen to succeed. Until recently, this was a positive picture. However, attendance this year has been affected detrimentally by the admission of a significant number of students with very complex emotional needs and with chronic poor attendance records in their previous schools. The school does not make excuses but ceaselessly analyses patterns of absence and takes decisive actions to improve attendance. Students are equipped to adopt a healthy and safe lifestyle. The additional 'dip-in-out' physical education provision, over and above the statutory programme, contributes to their fitness. The

student voice is strong. The vibrant school council has combined a Fair Trade enterprise project with the sale of healthy organic food in the tuck shop. Involvement of students in setting their behaviour targets is good and they feel that the school listens to them. Overall, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory, but improving, with a significant amount that is good. Except for in science, teachers' subject knowledge is good and makes a valuable contribution to the gains in knowledge students make. This is best seen in learning how to make films, animation work using computers and mixing sound effects. The school is addressing the deficiency in science: a subject specialist has been appointed and takes up post at the start of the next academic year. Activities are matched to students needs and fit their learning styles. In an exciting geography lesson, for example, students' concentration was focussed and their learning about grid references was good as they sojourned through mowed grass cut in shapes linked to the topography on a map. Students like the sensory activities provided for them and learn well through using their hands. There are, though, a few significant deficiencies in some of the teaching. Not all teachers are confident in using assessment to plan specific learning outcomes for every student in every teaching session. Currently, not every classroom has an interactive whiteboard, which sometimes adversely impacts on teaching. Teachers cannot use the computer software they would like to give teaching a sparkle and promote students' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. The vocational programmes for Year 9 and Key Stage 4 students are very effective. These courses enable students to access accreditation which provides a meaningful stepping stone to enter college or get on the rung of the employment ladder. The recently introduced flexi-programme, enabling students to choose to opt into certain timetabled programmes during the week, has improved students' motivation to learn. They can dip in and out of exciting and innovative curriculum programmes which grab their imagination and interest them. These programmes are designed to promote important work related skills, such as sewing for a purpose, and linking information and communication technology skills to making music of a high quality. The animation work combined with a film making programme is of high quality and promotes enjoyment in learning. Mixing of sound using decks enthuses students to learn. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. It supports students in adopting a healthy and safe lifestyle. However, there is not a discrete programme to develop students' emotional literacy skills. Key Stage 3 students do not receive a balanced design and technology programme, but there is a plan to address this deficiency. In addition Key Stage 4 students do not have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language. Links with high schools and partnerships with business enterprises in the community enable students to be successfully integrated with their mainstream peers particularly for the development of their work related skills. Extra-curricular provision, although satisfactory, is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with strengths in pastoral care. An effective partnership between the school and external agencies supports students with mental health difficulties well. The good link with social services benefits students in public care and supports them in their learning. Child protection is robust. Risk assessments, including those of behaviour, are thorough and detailed. Students say, 'We can talk to our teaching assistants about any of our problems.' Parents report that their children are well cared for and that this school gives them a second chance to succeed. Induction and transition arrangements are good. Students' behaviour is tracked meticulously. Data from this tracking is used very effectively to plan to build students' confidence and self-esteem. However, tracking of students' academic progress is inconsistent. Not all teachers are yet confident in managing the assessment system implemented by the school to track the small steps of progress students make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the other members of the senior leadership team provide good leadership. Since the last inspection the headteacher has brought about a change of culture within the school which has benefited students. All teachers now believe that students within the school can succeed in examinations and secure good jobs. Governance is effective. Governors challenge and support the headteacher well. Good systems are in place to check how well the school is doing, but some management systems, such as the monitoring of teaching and learning, are not sufficiently linked to outcomes for students. The school improvement plan focuses on raising students' achievement but it is too cluttered. Priorities are not sufficiently crisp and so senior management is attempting to do too much at once. However, recent robust actions taken have improved the curriculum very significantly and improved students' behaviour. Action to improve attendance this year has not been so successful, but there is a determination to address this issue and the school looks to the local authority for support in this area. The school has recognized that not all subject leaders have the skills to use data to identify how to improve students' achievement. There is a plan to give them the training and support required to enable them to be more effective in their role.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

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?	3

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.

Annex A

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	2
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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making me welcome as a visitor in your school. I greatly enjoyed talking with a group of you. During my visit you were mature, worked hard and behaved so well. It is clear that many of you have improved your behaviour and have a more positive attitude to learning since being in this school. I was impressed by the decision you have made to opt for a Fair Trade school uniform so that, as you put it, 'those who make it will get a decent wage'.

There are many good things in your school. The vocational courses on offer to you enable you to get places at colleges when you leave school or to get jobs. The opportunities you have to do animation work with computers, make films and mix sound are amongst the best I have ever seen. Your teachers and teaching assistants care for you exceptionally well and want you to be successful.

Overall, your school is a satisfactory school. I think that with your help it can become a good school. I have asked Mrs Scroggie to make some improvements so that your school becomes a better school. She was aware of them and has plans to improve the areas in need of improvement. Importantly, I have asked her to improve the attendance of those of you who do not attend regularly. Please help her by coming to school regularly and on time so that you achieve more and get to college or get a job when you leave. I have also asked her to help all of your teachers to make better use of what they know about what you can do and what you struggle with so that they can plan more effectively to help you do better. Finally, I have asked her to ensure that those of you in Years 7 to 9 have the opportunity to do all of the design and technology subjects that your friends do in their mainstream schools and that those of you in Years 10 and 11 have a chance to study a foreign language.