



Werneth School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106136
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 300482
Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Brian Sharples HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Harrytown
School category	Community		Romiley, Stockport
Age range of pupils	11–16		Cheshire SK6 3BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 494 1222
Number on roll (school)	1288	Fax number	0161 494 1397
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Holt
		Headteacher	Mrs P Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2006		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	7–8 February 2007	300482

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school which draws its students from a mixture of social class areas. The majority of students come from two wards which have low levels of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals and the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with national averages. The percentage of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or whose first language is not English is well below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

During the previous inspection the school was placed in a category of concern and given a notice to improve. Over the last 12 months the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised for improvement.

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Werneth is now a satisfactory and improving school. Around nine months ago the structure of the senior leadership team was changed and new systems and ways of working have been introduced. In some cases it is too early to see an immediate impact, but the most noticeable have been the improvement in standards and progress at Key Stage 4 and the overall rate of pupils' progress by the time they leave school.

Overall, standards remain below national averages in both key stages with some concerns over science and English. However, given the overall low levels of ability on entry, students now make satisfactory progress by the time they leave Year 11. This improvement is down to the drive by the senior leadership and hard work by the teachers. There are however, a small group of higher ability students who are not achieving as well as they could.

The care and support provided for students is a positive feature of the school. Most students speak favourably of their time at school and say they feel safe. The majority of students believe that any problems will be sorted out by a member of staff. However, academic guidance is not as well embedded and as a result, some students do not reach their potential. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory, although it is slightly better than this in lessons. However, there is not yet a fully considerate or orderly attitude as students move around the school. Attendance rates are below average. The school is introducing strategies to improve this situation but it is too soon to see any major impact. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. Opportunities for students to develop work-based skills and an understanding of economic well-being are presently underdeveloped.

The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory with some good features. Students are generally positive about the quality of teaching in the school. One pupil said, 'Werneth is now a dynamic place to come and learn. Teaching is adapted to meet the different learning styles.' Unfortunately, the good features of teaching are not yet consistently applied by all staff across the school. Teachers are beginning to embed the features of assessment for learning into their lessons, but they are not yet fully in place. Teachers are setting targets for students but this and the use of pupil or peer assessment has to be further developed.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The senior leadership is introducing new initiatives and new ways of working and the school is undergoing a period of change for the better. However, not all the changes have yet been embedded or consolidated to impact fully on outcomes. The senior leaders have carried

out a good review of the school which generally shows they know the school well. The governing body is carrying out its duties to a satisfactory standard and now should sharpen its involvement in the evaluation and development planning processes. Subject leaders are developing their roles, but the quality of their work is not yet of a consistently high standard across the school.

Responses from the parents' questionnaires show that there is presently an equal split in their opinions about the school. While a significant number believe there have been major improvements over the last 12 months, equally others have concerns over communication or how the school deals with issues. Channels of communication between parents and school could be improved. Nevertheless, given the qualities and mix of personnel among the senior leadership, the progress made in addressing the issues from the previous inspection and the developing nature of the school, the capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve standards and achievement across both key stages ensuring that all groups reach their full potential.
- Ensure that the good aspects of teaching and learning are embedded across the whole school.
- Improve the two way communication between and parents/carers so that they are more effectively involved in their child's learning and the work of the school.
- Improve rates of attendance across the school.
- Plan and provide more opportunities which develop work based skills and students' understanding of economic well-being.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When students enter the school in Year 7 their standards of attainment are below those expected nationally particularly in literacy. Standards at Key Stage 3 have remained below the national average for the last three years. In 2006 lengthy staff absences contributed to school targets not being met in English and science, though targets were met in mathematics.

In 2006 the percentage of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE rose from 34% to 46%. However, this still remains below the national average and the school failed to meet its target by 4%. There are positive strengths in some subjects including art and design, business, dance, drama and mathematics. Underperforming subjects include French, science and textiles. The school has considerably reduced the number of students who leave the school with no qualification. Overall, students make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to Year 11. Those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with good support and as a result also make satisfactory progress.

Students' progress is more rapid at Key Stage 4 as a result of changes to the curriculum combined with an improved tracking system which highlights underachievement earlier.

The school has identified the need to embed this more consistently across all subjects and all year groups. The school is also aware of the need to further monitor the relative performance of different groups of students such as higher achievers to ensure that they reach their potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Their social development however, is good because there are many chances for students to develop teamwork and cooperation skills in lessons. Students' many responsibilities, including form representatives, peer mentoring and parents' evening assistants, all make a good contribution to their social development.

The school council has developed exceptionally well and makes an outstanding contribution to improving the school. For example, members have developed a website enabling students to give their views on issues such as teaching and behaviour around the school.

Behaviour is satisfactory. Much work has been done to improve behaviour and eliminate bullying, for example, an anti-bullying week was held recently. Staff and many students say that the 'discipline for learning' system and use of rewards has led to good improvements and there is little bullying now. 'There is a better atmosphere in school now', is a typical comment from students. Although there is a high proportion of fixed period exclusions, permanent exclusions are low and both are declining. The school's reluctance to exclude permanently shows its commitment to inclusion. However, many parents are concerned about behaviour and unclear about the school's strategies. Along with much concern about other issues, this highlights a need to communicate better with parents.

Attendance is well below average. Many good initiatives are in place to improve attendance and these are starting to impact positively.

Students' contribution to the community is satisfactory. For instance, the school council is very active in pursuing school improvement and is currently developing ideas to develop basketball facilities for peers and the wider community after school. Students adopt healthy lifestyles adequately and say that the school is influencing their attitudes towards healthier eating. However, inspectors have concerns about the fabric of the building, for instance, the state of the toilets. Chances to develop work related and other useful skills are limited. Some good work is going on in personal and social education, but work experience is short and students' awareness of business and enterprise matters is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A significant amount of teaching and learning is characterised by good features, although the quality varies between and within subjects. Students make the greatest progress in lessons where they are engaged by a range of teaching and learning strategies. This was highlighted in a geography lesson where students' interest was sustained and understanding enhanced by them role playing river flow. Students feel secure as a result of good relationships and mutual respect. In less effective lessons the teacher dominates the lesson and is not sufficiently familiar with the potential of individuals. As a result, students become passive in their learning, the rate of progress slows and the most able are not sufficiently challenged. When teaching assistants are well managed they make an effective contribution to the development of students' learning.

Where teaching is good, data and targets are used to monitor students' progress and to identify any underachievement. Students' written work shows that marking is not consistently frequent or rigorous enough to help students improve their own work. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well understood and met. As a result, they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and they make satisfactory progress.

The recent appointment of a coordinator for literacy has had a rapid and positive impact on the promotion of literacy skills. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning is beginning to develop. However, the development of numeracy skills is not commonly featured in lesson planning. Consultation with parents, discussion with students and analysis of work revealed some concern about the quality or regularity of setting homework.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets all the statutory requirements at both key stages. The provision is enriched by a wide range of extra activities including a Year 7 camp, a foreign exchange and theatre visits. There are a substantial number of extra-curricular activities on offer particularly in sports and expressive arts, both of which attract a good number of participants. ICT is being used increasingly as a learning tool across a number of subjects. For example, higher ability Year 11 mathematics students complete their coursework through the medium of ICT allowing the teacher to provide them with greater challenge. However, this is not yet consistently applied across all subjects. The school places a suitably strong emphasis on students' personal development, including citizenship, with lessons taught by subject specialists. All Year 10 students undertake a week's work experience and the school provides a range of different choices for students entering Key Stage 4 to cater for their different ways of learning. The partnerships with a local college and other outside providers offer a satisfactory

alternative for some students who have little interest in the traditional curriculum. The school's recent thrust on developing literacy skills across all subjects is beginning to have an impact on learning but the promotion of students' numeracy, financial and enterprise skills is at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff's commitment to the care of students is a positive feature of the school. The introduction of the peer mentor group for students in Year 7 together with the learning mentor support, are examples of how the school supports students from the moment they start at the school. Students say that they feel safe and are well cared for. Safeguarding arrangements are in place and supported by appropriate training for staff. Students are helped to develop healthy attitudes. For example, they are encouraged to drink water regularly and healthy food options on offer at lunchtimes are increasing.

The school is inclusive in its provision. The care and support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who have English as an additional language are good. Support for more vulnerable students is backed up through good liaison with appropriate outside agencies. Overall, students in these vulnerable groups make satisfactory progress with a few achieving exceptionally well because of the consistently good support, guidance and dedication of staff.

Students receive good support and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions about subject choices in Year 9 and post-16 courses and pathways.

The quality of the academic advice is not as high as the care and support. Most of the targets given to students are appropriate and known by them. However, the guidance students receive on how to achieve their targets is less secure. Although some students receive the necessary guidance to move on in their learning, some groups such as high achievers are less well guided and do not always reach their potential.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team (SLT) structure has undergone a period of significant change over the last nine months including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and the inclusion of four additional members. The headteacher and deputy headteachers in particular have been significant in bringing about changes and improvements to the school. There is a renewed focus and emphasis on raising achievement and standards across the school. This has certainly been effective in raising the overall rate of students' progress by the time they leave school. Some of the new systems and procedures need more time to become embedded before they impact fully on outcomes. Nevertheless, the effort on the part of school leaders and staff has seen some satisfactory progress over the last year. The school development

plan effectively addresses the issues identified for improvement in the previous inspection report.

The SLT has introduced some good systems for quality assuring and tracking progress across all aspects of the school's work. There are regular reports to governors and subject leaders meet regularly with a designated member of the SLT in order to review departmental progress. The SLT has recently completed a whole school self-evaluation which involved consultation with all staff and governors. The final report shows that the SLT knows well where the main strengths and weaknesses lie across the school. However, there was little input from other parties such as governors or parents. The role of subject leaders is developing but is still variable across the school. They have a good set of support materials to help them monitor the quality of provision and teaching in their subject areas. Action plans and evaluations are produced for each subject which in turn reflect the school development plan and inform whole-school evaluations.

Performance management is in place for all teachers and the school is now working towards implementing a system for all teaching assistants and learning mentors. The SLT ensure that all safeguarding procedures are in place and followed correctly. Links with parents and the wider community are only satisfactory and require further development. Responses from parents through the inspection questionnaire show that there is presently a real mix of attitude towards the school. Some parents are very positive but others believe there are inconsistencies in practice or that communication needs to improve. A significant number of parents acknowledge some improvements in the school over the last year.

The governing body has established sound procedures to ensure that their duties and responsibilities are adequately covered. Each curriculum area has a link governor and they are beginning to take a more active part in the life of the school. There are aspects of governance which are not as strong as others, for example, governors' involvement in school self-evaluation or the production of the school development plan. The SLT has put into place a significant number of new working procedures and strategies for improvement. A period of consolidation and embedding is now needed before the full impact will be seen. The school presently offers satisfactory value for money. Given the progress made to date there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	4
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	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

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.

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	3
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	3
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk with you about your work and to listen to your views about the school. We have decided that Werneth School is a satisfactory and improving school. We also recognise that a significant number of you and your parents, along with the teachers and governors are pleased with the progress made over the last 12 months. However, this is not yet the opinion of all parents so the school needs to continue to work hard at improving standards and make sure that everyone is aware of what progress is being made.

What we liked most about your school.

- The good leadership provided by the senior leaders of the school.
- The way that the leadership of the school know well the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The care and support available for you.
- The way you feel safe around school and know who to go to in times of trouble.
- The improving relationships between yourselves and with teachers.
- The way you are being encouraged to lead healthy lives through the food you eat and the physical activities available.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- We want all staff to make sure that whatever your ability, you are encouraged to raise the standard of work you achieve in all subjects.
- We want teachers to make sure that things like marking your work, setting homework, assessing your progress and setting targets are always done to the same high standard.
- We want you all to work hard at attending school regularly.
- We would like to see the two way communication between school and parents/carers improve so that they are more effectively involved in your learning and the work of the school.
- We want staff to provide you with more learning opportunities which prepare you for future life.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved so far. We found our two days in the school to be an enjoyable experience.