



# The Cathedral CE High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 108296  
**Local Authority** Wakefield  
**Inspection number** 300494  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Elisabeth Linley HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Thornes Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Wakefield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		West Yorkshire WF2 8QF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303740
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	997	<b>Fax number</b>	01924 382674
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Parton
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul West
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2005		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	24–25 January 2007	300494

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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**

Cathedral School is an average sized comprehensive school. Eighty six per cent of the students are White British. Other groups are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a lower than average proportion of these students is in the early stages of learning English as a second language. The largest of these groups is of Pakistani heritage but there are an increasing numbers from Eastern Europe and from the families of refugees and asylum seekers. A much larger than average proportion of students is entitled to free school meals and the percentage of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average.

When the school was inspected in 2005 it was judged to require significant improvement and was issued with a Notice to Improve. Since that time much has happened. The school was awarded specialist arts status for performing arts from January 2006 and in the same year gained the Artsmark Gold award. Cathedral has also been successful in securing funding for an expansion of the arts accommodation to include a new drama studio: this work is due to be completed in February 2007.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. Cathedral School now provides a satisfactory quality of education, with many good features, for all its students.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force for improvement. As a result, good progress has been made since the school's last inspection. Appointments to the leadership team and to the governing body have strengthened the leadership and management of the school; these are now good. An example of a strong initiative for improvement is in the senior staff's work to implement a rigorous programme for quality assurance, including lessons observations, a review of planning and the close scrutiny of work. This process has promoted greater consistency across the school and is helping to improve both the quality of provision and standards. Middle managers are becoming more effective in their work following these changes.

The staff's response to school-based and external support and challenge has been good. Work to improve the quality of teaching, for example, has seen an increased focus on the use of assessment to support students' learning. This has included a clear focus on learning objectives within each lesson, and displays and descriptions of what the levels of attainment mean: students are now more knowledgeable about what levels they are attaining. They are making better progress in lessons and this is linked to improved results in the national tests and examinations. Students' achievement overall is now satisfactory. However, there remains some underachievement in school, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in science. Standards overall are below average. More work is needed to increase the proportion of good lessons in which students make good progress so that standards rise at a quicker pace.

In order to aid students' achievement the school has modified the curriculum so that it better meets students' needs. This improved curriculum is complemented by the school's specialist status in the performing arts. A wide range of courses is available to students, and a small group of high achieving Year 12 students support the activity of younger students. Such provision has had a marked and widespread positive effect on the school and its community. The visionary management team for the specialist area work with enthusiasm and flair, within school and in the wider community. Examination results in the arts subjects have improved markedly over the last three years and are significant in the school's work to raise standards throughout school. The care, guidance and support provided for students also contribute well to the school's drive for improvement. Provision in this respect is highlighted by the outstanding student support centre, of which the school is rightly proud.

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

- Improve achievement and raise standards overall, particularly at Key Stage 3 and in science.

- Ensure that more teaching and learning are good or better.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Many students start at Cathedral School with below average standards in English, mathematics and science. This picture of below average standards in the core subjects remains in both key stages but results show an improving trend and represent satisfactory achievement overall.

The proportion of students who attained the expected Level 5 or above in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 has improved in all core subjects over the past three years. However, in 2006 science results were still significantly below average. A legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 3 remains and an accelerated rate of improvement is required in order to achieve the governors' targets for 2007.

GCSE results have risen over the past three years with results in the arts representing the greatest increase. In 2003 only 16% of students achieved five or more higher grades at GCSE. In 2006 the figure was 42%, but when English and mathematics are included the number falls to 22%. These headline statistics for the results at the end of Key Stage 4 are in line with the school's targets. The school analyses results very well and identifies accurately those areas which need particular focus. For example, strategies have been introduced to improve science results at Key Stage 3, which lag behind the other core subjects, and specific work is targeted at boys' underperformance at Key Stage 4.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. This is because, in spite of the school's best efforts and the improvements made, attendance is still below the national average. However, attendance is rising and unauthorised absence has reduced significantly. Most students enjoy school. They feel safe from bullying and report that any incidents are dealt with promptly: their behaviour overall is now good. This improvement reflects the success of the school's 'consequences code' and the availability of staff from the dedicated team who support students with any difficulties. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The students learn values and explore issues through the performing arts, citizenship and 'thought for the day'. Students are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles, and the benefits of good food and exercise, balanced with risk taking and keeping safe. Their participation in the community is wide-ranging and is enhanced by the school's specialist status; students enjoy working with professional art groups. In this capacity they take their 'art' into the wider community and share it with primary pupils, with other secondary schools in the area and with adult community forums. Such experiences, together with their work placements, enable students to develop in confidence as they prepare for their future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have correctly been placed at the heart of the school's drive for improvement. A significant focus on personalising learning to meet the needs of students in lessons is beginning to make an impact. This was seen in good and outstanding lessons, where learning was exciting. Staff ensured that planned tasks were just right for their students, and teachers brought dynamism to the classroom to which students responded well. This increased the progress they made in lessons. Although improvements have been made and there is now more good teaching, there remains too high a proportion of satisfactory teaching. In these lessons the pace is often slow and teachers lack the confidence to try something new that would engage students better and make them more active in their learning. For example, in science lessons, a lack of investigative work meant that pupils did not achieve as well as they should. Further improvement in teaching is required to enable most students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make consistently good progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school's recent work to modify and strengthen the curriculum has been successful. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements and its organisation and content better serve the needs of students. The provision for the development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, for example, is improving. In Year 10 students choose from a suitable range of options and the vast majority have their preferences met. The school also ensures that those students who find it difficult to access the full curriculum are catered for with vocational courses and work-related activities that match their needs more closely. All the pathways on offer in Years 10 and 11 are structured to ensure that students can study five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics. The school's specialist status in the performing arts offers good quality opportunities for students. The promotion and involvement of professional arts groups is a feature of the provision and two groups are now resident in school. In addition, the performing arts department has worked on projects with the science and history departments and, from this, a 'toolkit' is being compiled to support arts activities across the curriculum. This curriculum area is very popular with students and they are proud of its success.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The good quality of support that students receive gives them ambition and promotes their positive self-esteem. The student support centre is outstanding in the care and guidance it offers to students. Staff are committed to meeting students' needs and are ready to listen to any worries or concerns. Early identification of learners at risk ensures arrangements are made to enable them to work well. Guidance and information

are also available from a range of external sources, including the school-based health team. Arrangements for welfare and safeguarding pupils are in place. They are regularly reviewed and accurate records are kept. Students confirm that they receive good guidance on issues relating to their health and safety.

Assessment systems within school have been streamlined and standardised to provide consistency for teachers and students. Students' attainment and their progress are now monitored on a six-weekly basis. The data gathered is used well to identify individuals or groups of students who are underachieving. From this, a good range of well thought out and engaging strategies have been implemented to guide students' achievement. Review days, which involve students, parents and achievement coaches, are well attended and are successful in sharing students' grades and setting objectives for improvement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. His drive for improvement has motivated and enthused students, staff and governors alike. The school's work is underpinned by consistently high expectations of all. Staff are held accountable for the quality of the school's provision and students' achievement by the new and effective leadership team. Middle managers are becoming increasingly more effective. Financial management is good and supports planned developments for improvement well. Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the school's work effectively through systems that are rigorous and robust. As a result this is a school that knows itself well: self-evaluation is good. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress. Its impact is evident in an improved curriculum that better meets the needs of its students. There are strong and improved partnerships with feeder schools and a local college of further education. Progress is also evident in the students' achievement and in standards that are beginning to rise. Such successes demonstrate the school's 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	<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>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
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	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<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	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 welcoming us when we visited Cathedral recently. You will remember it was only just over a year ago that Cathedral was last inspected. At that time school was given a Notice to Improve because it required significant improvement. I am pleased to tell you that this is no longer the case because since that time your school has improved well. Your headteacher's leadership has been outstanding and students, staff and governors have responded to his high expectations for you to succeed. You all deserve your success.

There are a number of ways that the school has demonstrated its improvement. The curriculum has been reorganised and improved. Your behaviour is now good. Attendance is getting better, although there is still a way to go for some of you to make sure you attend regularly. The care, guidance and support you receive are good: a particular feature is the student support centre which is exceptional in what it provides. Your performing arts provision is of high quality and contributes well to your school's work to raise standards. The leadership and management of your school, including the work of governors, are now good.

There are, however, always ways that schools can improve and there are some things that we want you to concentrate on now. Although results in tests and exams are improving, standards in school remain below what they should be for your age. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 in particular need to work hard to catch up and this also applies to all students in science. This isn't just your issue: it is your teachers' responsibility also to help you achieve well. They will do this by continuing to improve the quality of teaching in school. There is

now a greater focus on what levels you are working at and what you have to do to improve your work. It was good to see that most of you now know what these are.

The good improvements made this year have shown us that you have the capacity to do well. So we are asking you to work with staff to make the following changes.

- Make sure that the good and better teaching and learning increases so you consistently make good progress in lessons.
- Build on the progress you make in lessons so that you all achieve well and standards are raised throughout school, particularly in Key Stage 3 and in science.

I wish you all every success in the future.