

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112932
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number	301773
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Matharu HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	950
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nye Rowlands
Headteacher	Mr Stuart Ash
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 1999
School address	Long Lane Chapel-en-le-Frith High Peak Derbyshire SK23 0TQ
Telephone number	01298813118
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Chapel-en-le-Frith High School is an average sized secondary school for students aged 11 to 16. It serves the market town of Chapel-en-le-Frith and surrounding villages. A significant number of students come from beyond the school's immediate catchment area through parental choice. The school has an Enhanced Resource provision, established in 2003, for a wide range of moderate and complex learning difficulties and disabilities, including language and communication difficulties. As a result, the number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above the national average, with many of them coming to the school from outside the local area. The vast majority of students are of White British backgrounds. Their socio-economic circumstances are comparable to the national average.

The school is part of the 'Peak 11' federation which includes all of the secondary schools of the High Peak and Derbyshire Dales. The school gained specialist Technology status in September 2005. It holds the Sportsmark, Artsmark Silver and Investors In People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Chapel-en-le-Frith is a good school with some outstanding features. Standards are good, being consistently above average at both Key Stages 3 and 4 over recent years. From a broadly average position on entry to the school, all groups of students make good progress throughout their five years at the school.

The personal development of students is good. They are mostly positive about school life and the vast majority are enthusiastic learners. As a result of imaginative international links and a well planned curriculum, their cultural development is outstanding. Students' behaviour throughout the inspection was considered good overall, however, a significant minority of parents do not feel behaviour is good. Despite this, the majority of parents indicate satisfaction with the school overall.

Teaching and learning are good overall, with some variations. There is some outstanding teaching, with some that is less effective, although still at a satisfactory level. Most teaching is characterised by good pace, high levels of challenge for all learners and good classroom management. When teaching is less effective, lessons are less well structured and managed, and expectations of students are lower. Some marking and feedback to students is excellent; however, this is inconsistent across the curriculum.

The curriculum is outstanding in providing relevant and enriching opportunities for all groups of learners. Vocational provision and work-related learning activities provide excellent opportunities for students to develop relevant skills for their future lives. Provision for students with a wide range of complex learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding and meets students' needs exceptionally well. Technology status is having a significant impact, both on the curriculum and in improving teaching and learning. The school uses its expertise well with partner primary schools in providing information and communication technology (ICT) lessons and technology training for staff. The school is strengthening ICT links continually with a variety of external partners and organisations.

The care, guidance and support of students are outstanding. Here, recently revised systems are taking this forward in a modern, relevant way, which makes best use of staff time and expertise, and achieves very effective pastoral care and academic guidance.

Leadership and management are consistently good at all levels. The headteacher, senior team and governors provide clear direction for the work of the school. The majority of middle leaders are strong contributors to school improvement and lead their teams effectively. The strengths in leadership and management indicate that there is good capacity for further improvement. Self-evaluation is good overall, however, the evaluation of teaching and learning is not as precise as it could be.

The current procedures for monitoring lessons do not provide detailed enough information to measure the impact of the school's various improvement activities. Good improvement has been achieved since the last inspection. Given the positive outcomes for students, the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring greater consistency in teachers' expectations of students and also in effective classroom management to match the best practice evident in the school.

- Build on the excellent practice in the school so that teachers' marking provides clear guidance on how to improve students' work in all subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the monitoring and evaluation of this provides a clear baseline from which improvement can be measured.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Students enter Year 7 with a wide range of starting points, but taken overall, attainment on entry is broadly average. They make good progress in Years 7 to 9 and achieve test results that are consistently above average. Difficulties in staffing in English in 2006 had an adverse effect on students' progress and the English test results declined. These staffing difficulties have now been resolved and inspection evidence shows that students are again making good progress and standards are above average. Progress in science is good and in mathematics it is satisfactory. Although girls make slightly better progress than boys, there are no particular groups that underachieve. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress.

Students' good progress is maintained through Years 10 and 11. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades is generally above average, while the proportion gaining these grades including English and mathematics is average. Girls again make better progress than boys and the gap between the performance of boys and girls is wider than the national difference. The school is implementing a number of well considered strategies to tackle this issue. Challenging school and specialist targets are set. The 2006 targets set for Year 9 were achieved and the school was close to the targets set for Year 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development is good. They enjoy school and this is demonstrated by their above average attendance. Students show their concern for others by engaging in many charitable activities.

This results in a welcoming and safe community which fosters an understanding of responsible citizenship. Students' spiritual, social and moral development is good, as are the attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority.

They are positive about school and appreciate all it offers. However, a minority display boisterous behaviour, particularly at lesson changeover times. The school works hard to maintain the small number of students who present challenging behaviour in full time education and permanent exclusions are rare. This is because of highly effective support and an adapted curriculum leading to better motivation. Students' cultural development is outstanding. They develop a very good understanding of different beliefs and cultures and take part enthusiastically in the numerous culturally enriching activities available to them. High participation rates in sporting activities help to develop a healthy lifestyle as does an understanding of healthy eating. Students' work-related skills provide a good base for their future working lives. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community and the school council is very active in its work to improve the environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. The inspection team saw examples of outstanding teaching in English, German and learning support. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Their use of classroom display, especially good in art, helps to create a favourable atmosphere for learning. They are aided by a strong team of classroom assistants, who provide effective support to students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Some subject departments have developed effective systems for sharing good practice with their colleagues and with teachers from other schools. Advanced Skills Teachers contribute well to the sharing of good practice.

Specialist Technology status has had a beneficial effect on teaching and learning. Teachers have made significant progress in developing the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects, although not all teachers are yet confident, and their skill levels vary.

Most lessons are well planned and managed. Lively, engaging activities keep all students involved, and they behave well. However, where teachers' classroom management skills are less good, students' behaviour suffers. Some lessons remain too focused on the teacher and offer few opportunities for discussion in which students can express their own ideas.

Inspectors saw examples of outstanding practice in marking and assessment in English and art, but often marking does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provision is outstanding. There is a good range of appropriate vocational courses both in school and off-site including courses in rural skills. Careers guidance is good and available to all students. Overall, the school provides a well balanced curriculum which challenges the full range of learners. The present programme of personal, social and health education is satisfactory and will benefit from specialist teaching and extended time in the new school year. The school's participation in the 'Connecting Classrooms' project with schools in Ghana and Zimbabwe enriches learning, especially in art, music and geography. Extension activities are provided through the 'Peak 11' group of schools for gifted and talented students as a summer school. Learning Support is outstanding, ensuring real progress in a challenging and supportive environment. Extra-curricular provision is a strength, supporting learning and providing enhancement activities such as sport, music, drama, Young Enterprise and activities towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Improvement planning and curriculum review have identified areas for development, where progress is already under way. For example, ICT across the curriculum is being developed by a group of 'e-champions.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, support and guidance for students are outstanding. The recently-introduced house system and pastoral and academic guidance arrangements are developing well and demonstrate the school's commitment to ongoing improvement in this area of its work. Students appreciate all aspects of the available support; one student commented, 'Pastoral managers make things happen' and they value and understand regular progress reports. These reports include details

of progress towards target grades. Targets are the outcome of twice a year one-to-one interviews. A mentoring scheme is in place for targeted students and those who request this. Information is available to students at all major points in their education. Students feel safe in school and indicate that bullying is not a significant concern for them. Statutory requirements on safeguarding are met and child protection policy and procedures are fully in place. Care is of a very high quality. The breakfast club offers support to vulnerable students, the school uses the part-time services of a nurse and a counsellor and seeks opportunities to improve its care and support of students. The support for looked-after children, both personal and academic, is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides strong leadership and maintains a clear focus on improving outcomes for students. He has a clear and realistic grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. He is well supported by a strong leadership team with a shared understanding of the school's priorities to continue to improve teaching and learning and provide positive curriculum opportunities for all students. There is a strong emphasis on effective staff development and training to enable all staff to contribute fully to the school's development. The school's Advanced Skills Teachers are effective in leading initiatives to improve teaching and learning. Improvement planning at school and department level is thorough and detailed and communicated successfully to staff; consequently there is a shared sense of purpose within the school.

Middle managers are good overall, with instances of outstanding leadership, for example, in Learning Support. Curriculum area managers have a good understanding of how to improve provision. For example, the curriculum leader of English responded well to the decline in results at KS3 in 2006, was reflective and rigorous in analysing the contributory factors and introducing a variety of appropriate improvement strategies.

At a school level, monitoring and evaluation procedures are developing and becoming more rigorous. However the current monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice is not recorded in a way which provides enough precise information to measure improvements.

Progress of students is carefully monitored and the school uses information well in tracking and target setting. Self-evaluation overall is accurate: the school has a good grasp of its strengths and areas for improvement and is responsive to new ideas. Involvement within the wider federation of Peak 11 schools is helpful in sharing best practice and providing effective collaboration.

The commitment to equality and inclusion is strong; the school has been extremely successful in integrating a former Special School and its staff into its provision. This is evident in the school's inclusive atmosphere and ethos and the excellent provision for students with a wide range of complex learning difficulties or disabilities.

Morale of staff is positive and contributes well to the collaborative atmosphere which benefits students' learning and well being. Governors are strong contributors to the school's work and success. They are well organised and have a good grasp of the schools strengths and areas for development. They hold the school to account well and achieve a very good balance of challenge and support.

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Annex A

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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	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	1
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

18 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Chapel-en-le Frith High School, High Peak, Derbyshire SK23 0TQ

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school - we enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views. You told us that your school is a good one with many positive features. You were very clear about the school's strengths and your appreciation of the many opportunities provided for you, both within the curriculum and beyond. We agree with you and found that your school is providing you with a good standard of education overall and enabling you to succeed in lots of different ways.

We identified many good features of your school. These include:

- High standards in Year 9 tests and at GCSE level.
- Good teaching which is helping you to achieve good progress.
- An excellent curriculum which provides you with a full range of good courses and helps you to develop a range of skills and talents.
- Outstanding care and support. The new pastoral system very effectively supports your welfare and guides your academic development.
- Good leadership from your headteacher, senior staff and governors to maintain school improvement and help you to achieve your best.
- The personal skills and qualities that many of you display in lessons and in your contributions to the school and wider community.

Good schools always look for ways to further improve and your school is good at reflecting on this and trying new approaches accordingly. We have asked Mr Ash and his staff team to consider:

- Ensuring that all of your teachers have the same consistently high expectations of your work and behaviour in lessons and around the school. You can certainly help here, by making sure that you behave consistently well around the school at social times and change of lessons, as well as in lessons.
- Improving the marking of your work and feedback you receive to ensure consistency across all subjects. This is to make sure you get consistently good advice on how to improve in all lessons.
- Finding ways of observing lessons in order to be able to evaluate more easily where improvements are being achieved, and where there are still areas to develop further.

We hope that your school continues to do well and look forward to hearing of your progress in the future.

Best wishes

Judith Matharu

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools