

# Carshalton High School for Girls

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102999
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sutton
<b>Inspection number</b>	308192
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Chisnall 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1211
6th form	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr P Harding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs V Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	West Street Carshalton SM5 2QX
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8647 8294
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8773 8931

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<b>Age group</b>	11-19
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## Introduction

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors carried out the inspection.

## Description of the school

Carshalton High School for Girls is a little larger than most secondary schools and draws its students from a large number of primary schools across a wide area. The attainment of students when they start at the school is below average, with few girls at the higher levels of attainment. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is a little higher than average. There is a similar proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is found nationally. Around 30% of students have a minority ethnic heritage, although no one group predominates. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status, the Artsmark Gold award and is a Training School for initial teacher training.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Carshalton High School for Girls is a rapidly improving school that is providing its students with a satisfactory education. It has several good features that contribute to this profile. The most significant one is the leadership provided by the headteacher, very effectively complemented by that of the senior team. Between them, they have identified what students could be achieving and set challenging targets for which to aim. In a relatively short time, the impact of this direction is evident with, for example, GCSE results that are the school's best ever and closing the gap with the national average.

Senior leaders check the work of teachers and departments thoroughly and successfully identify areas where outcomes for students could be better. They know that teaching and learning are satisfactory across the school, with much that is good and some that is outstanding. However, not enough teaching is of the high standard necessary to help students make progress at a fast enough rate and reach high standards. Already, students reach standards that are close to national averages, if a little below, and make satisfactory progress from their starting points. In some subjects, such as English, their progress is good because of consistently good teaching; in others, such as science, their progress is slower. Senior leaders recognise that there is the capacity for standards to be at least at the national average and for students to make better progress still; they are working successfully with middle leaders, such as year and faculty heads, to bring this about.

The school is using performance data well to track students' progress and this is especially helpful in evaluating overall strengths and weaknesses. However, when lessons are checked, or when plans for improvement are being made, not enough attention is given to the skills and knowledge that students should be gaining, and whether the intellectual challenge for them is sufficient.

Students' good personal development is a successful feature of the school. Students enjoy school. They are polite and confident, and are well prepared for the next stage in education and the world of work. Most attend well, although a small minority do not attend as often as they should and some are regularly late for school. Students feel safe in school and most are not worried about bullying. The school has taken effective steps to support those students who find school life difficult at times. The new learning inclusion centre provides a good way to support the learning of those at risk from exclusion. As a result, exclusion rates have fallen by more than half. Parents and carers have expressed some concerns about behaviour but inspectors have found that most students behave very well.

The school has good capacity for further improvement because it knows its strengths and weaknesses well and takes effective action to deal with the latter. It offers satisfactory value for money, but value that is improving as achievement rises.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

Sixth form students start from a lower base than would normally be expected and they reach standards overall that are in line with national averages. Progress in the sixth form is satisfactory. Within this picture are some strengths and some weaknesses. At AS level, progress is good and the pass rate has improved to higher than the national average. However, there is too wide a variation in the performance of individual subjects. For example, sociology and biology standards

are good but weak in art and design and in French and German. At A2 level, standards vary over time. Students have been making good progress to achieve around average standards but progress dipped in 2007. Even so, pass rates were in line with the national average. Again, standards between subjects vary too much. Sociology remains strong at A2 level, as do English literature and media studies.

There are many opportunities for students' personal development, such as the enrichment programme through which they support younger students. Other enrichment opportunities involve the World Challenge event. Sixth formers present themselves as good role models for younger students. Their attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but with much that is good. Not enough lessons offer students the intellectual challenge they need to make consistently good progress across all subjects. There are good plans in place to improve the curriculum through extending the choice of minority subjects, already supported by good links with other providers. Students are supported well but they need more guidance on self-study skills. The sixth form is well led and staff accurately identify where improvements need to be made. For example, this has led to better careers advice and improved use of student progress data.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more lessons are of the high quality needed for students to make faster progress.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that there is a clear focus on what students are learning when evaluating lessons and improvement plans.

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**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards overall are improving and close to national averages. In Key Stage 3, students make satisfactory progress from their below average starting points and attain standards that are a little below, but close to, average. They do particularly well in English, where standards are improving, especially at the higher levels. They do less well in mathematics and science because teaching is not as strong and there have been some recruitment issues for specialist staff. However, in science more students than expected gain the higher levels.

In Key Stage 4, standards are rising at a faster rate than nationally and are close to average. More than half the students gained five A\*-C GCSE passes in 2007, a significant rise from previous years. The proportion that gain five good passes including English and mathematics is at the national average, and those that gain five A\*-G passes is above average. Overall, students make satisfactory progress from their starting points. Progress is good in some subjects, such as English, sociology, history and dance. Again, this is linked to stronger teaching.

Students' overall achievement is satisfactory and there is little difference in the achievements of different groups. For instance, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make as much progress as other students. However, the achievements of looked after students are good, as they make good progress and exceed their targets. This is because of the support and

mentoring they receive. The school sets itself challenging targets for student achievement, and its tracking data suggest that it is on course to meet them.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students are welcoming and friendly and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in the school. Relationships are generally good. A few parents have expressed concerns about bullying, but students say they feel safe and that bullying is 'not an issue'. The school has worked hard to raise students' awareness of how to keep safe and any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly. Students' spiritual, moral, social and culture awareness are well developed and there is a strong sense of racial harmony within the school. They have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, although a few do not always make healthy eating choices.

Behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. However, in a few lessons, where the challenge is not high enough, some inattention occurs. Attendance remains below, but close to, the national average. The school has introduced good systems to monitor and improve students' attendance and punctuality; early improvement is evident. There are many opportunities for students to contribute to both the life of the school and the local community. Students take up these opportunities with relish. They are keen to be part of the school council and to act as prefects or form captains. Sixth form students also become peer mentors, whilst others help to organise charity fund raising events. Students' key skills, in areas such as information and communications technology, are improving and they have a good understanding of the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there is inconsistency in the quality of lessons across the school. For instance, teaching in English and sociology is consistently good and outstanding. However, too many lessons are only satisfactory and this is reflected in the way that standards vary between subjects. Strong features of lessons are the very good relationships between staff and students, teachers' subject knowledge and students' good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Where teaching is weaker and learning slower, it is because planning does not consider the needs of the whole range of ability. The result is a lack of challenge. Not enough teachers are clear about the skills, knowledge and values they want students to have gained by the end of the lesson, and so assessment is not sharp. Some students complain about 'too much copying from books'.

There is some good practice in setting targets and showing students what they need to do to improve, but marking is not always linked to individual targets. Homework is set inconsistently, and this is a concern shared by several parents. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress in lessons where they have learning support assistants. In unsupported lessons, too many teachers fail to use the data and information they have to ensure better progress. Senior leaders are active in

introducing strategies to improve teaching and learning, such as the accelerated groups in Key Stage 3 and in setting targets for staff.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory but improving because of effective action taken by the leadership team. It meets statutory requirements. A major strength of provision throughout the school is the performing arts, in particular dance and drama. These are very popular with students and meet their interests well. There is a strong focus on students' personal, social and health education and this promotes students' development as young citizens. The school has recognised that the Key Stage 4 curriculum does not meet students' needs as fully as it might. There are good plans in place to widen this curriculum to include a range of vocational courses at different levels and clear 'learning pathways' for students to follow. However, the post-14 increased flexibility programme with other local schools goes a long way towards the provision of alternative Key Stage 4 routes. All students have the opportunity to learn about the world of work through programmes such as 'Broadening Horizons' in Year 9 and work experience in Year 10. There are good opportunities for enterprise education in the sixth form, such as the Young Enterprise Primary Programme, where students work in primary schools.

An additional strength of the curriculum is the wide range of enrichment and extension activities. There are many opportunities to take part in sport, music and drama clubs. During the inspection, for instance, students were auditioning to take part in a Christmas Talent Show, led by sixth formers. Parents and students are also appreciative of the many trips, whether they are team building for Year 12, a visit to the theatre or a trip to Normandy. All these enrich and extend student experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school manages the transfer from primary school very well and Year 7 students talk excitedly about their team-building activities. Parents recognise and value the smooth induction to the school. Staff are committed to students' welfare and place a high value on safety. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous. The school provides good pastoral support, particularly for vulnerable pupils such as looked-after children, who attend well and achieve higher results than the national average. The school has put considerable effort into dealing with bullying and its incidence has reduced significantly. The many measures in place to improve attendance and punctuality are beginning to have an impact.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. The two 'personal academic review days' between students and their tutors are valuable in setting subject targets. An improvement in the collection and use of data means that staff can spot underachievement easily. However, this information is not always used well in lesson planning, or in marking to personalise learning.

The high level of pastoral care continues into the sixth form. Academic guidance there is good, but there is not enough explicit help on how to study independently, and there are limited resources for this. The school is successfully raising students' aspirations and about one third of Year 13 apply to university.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are good and, taken overall, are having a significant impact on improving provision and raising standards. The most important feature in this picture is the very strong leadership of the headteacher. In a relatively short time, she has successfully created an environment where raising student achievement is the concern of managers at all levels. The senior leadership team provides consistently very good direction for the school and has a relentless focus on improving learning and raising standards. Middle leaders, such as faculty and year heads, are given responsibility and accountability for achieving demanding targets, such as meeting national averages in GCSE results. There is some inconsistency in this level of management as some subjects are improving at a faster rate than others. This is because not all departmental plans for improvement are sufficiently focused on expected gains in students' learning.

Senior and middle leaders monitor teaching and students' progress well. As a result, they have clear ideas about where standards should be higher and where teaching should be stronger. The guidance individual teachers receive is helpful to their development, but there should be greater emphasis on the standards that students are achieving and the challenges they are given. The governing body gives the school good support and is confident in the school's capacity for improvement. However, it does not have appropriately rigorous systems for independently checking how well the school and its students are doing. The budget is managed very well and effective steps have been taken to eliminate the small deficit that arose last year.



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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	16-19
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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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	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	2	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

11 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Carshalton High School for Girls, Carshalton, SM5 2QX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit very much and were especially grateful for the way in which you shared your views with us, and for helping us find our way around the school. This is what we are saying in the inspection report:

- Yours is a rapidly improving school and one that provides you with a satisfactory standard of education.
- Students are being well prepared for the next stage in their education and the world of work; they are happy and confident.
- Most students behave very well and are responsible young people.
- The school looks after students well, particularly those who need extra support at times.
- Students are making satisfactory progress and reach standards that are getting close to national averages.
- The headteacher and senior team are very effective in checking up on how students and the staff are doing, and in identifying where things need to be improved.

The inspection team and the headteacher agree that you could reach higher standards still, especially in some subjects such as mathematics and science. You and your parents told us that some lessons are better than others. We agree, and have asked the school to help all teachers plan and deliver lessons that consistently interest and challenge you, in order to help you make better progress. I am sure that you have ideas about your lessons that you can share with staff. In addition, some of you could attend school more often and turn up on time - that will help you do even better. We have also asked the staff to look closely at exactly what you are learning when they visit classes or in making plans to improve the curriculum.

The team joins me in sending you best wishes for your studies and hope that you all do very well in the future. Do read the full report for more information.

Yours sincerely

Michael Chisnall

Her Majesty's Inspector