

# Buile Hill High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105974
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	309000
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Price Grimshaw

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	860
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Grew
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs W O'Neill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Eccles Old Road Salford Lancashire M6 8RD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7361773
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7376556

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This slightly smaller than average high school serves an area of considerable social and economic deprivation. The great majority of students are of White British heritage and very few students are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Since the last inspection there has been a succession of several different headteachers. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for less than a month.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Buile Hill is a satisfactory school that is showing clear signs of improvement. Since the last inspection instability in staffing at senior management level has contributed to weaknesses in some aspects of the school's work. Over the last year, the school, with support from external agencies, has worked hard to stabilise the situation and bring about improvements. The impact of this work is now beginning to show and the new headteacher has started to work effectively with other senior leaders, staff and students in building upon the foundations for improvement already established.

There is secure evidence of recent improvement in students' standards and achievement, both of which are satisfactory. Students' standards of work when they start school are below average. Between 2004 and 2006, published data show that there was significant underachievement and standards were exceptionally low. Increased monitoring of lessons resulted in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, refinements in the school's use of assessment data have enabled staff to begin to identify those students at the greatest risk of underachievement. This in turn has led to students making better progress in 2007 than in the previous three years, although achievement at Key Stage 3, particularly in English, remains an area of concern.

Students' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. The school has worked successfully in encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyles and they demonstrate a good awareness of issues such as the importance of a sensible diet and exercise. Attendance, identified as an issue at the time of the last inspection, is still below the national average. However, the school is implementing a wide range of strategies to tackle this problem and there are some early signs of success. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. The school has rightly recognised that there is scope for further development of students' basic skills and this is now being tackled through initiatives across all subject areas.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and most match activities to meet the diverse needs of all their students. A minority of lessons, which are very good and outstanding, enable students to make rapid progress. In contrast, many other lessons tend to be too teacher-dominated, and, as a result, progress is slower. Marking of students' work, in the great majority of cases, is helpful and constructive and the best examples give precise guidelines to students on how to improve further. The curriculum is satisfactory and recent developments are improving the range of subjects and courses available to students. The quality of pastoral care is a strength of the school's work, with many teaching and support staff working very well together to provide tailored support to those who need it, particularly vulnerable students. Parents of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities typically expressed the view that, 'The support provided by staff in the learning support unit is excellent.'

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new senior leadership group has, within a short space of time, established a strong team approach to school improvement. Leaders and managers are aware that the school is still in the early stages of recovery following a period of instability and there has not been sufficient time to fully implement and monitor strategies to raise standards further. Despite recent weaknesses in outcomes for students, effective steps are now being taken to promote improvement and these demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement at Key Stage 3, particularly in English.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is all at least good.
- Ensure that improvement strategies are fully implemented and closely monitored in order to raise standards.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Current evidence supports the school's view that standards are below average and that students make satisfactory progress overall. Students generally enter the school with standards that are below average. In the 2006 national tests, Year 9 students reached standards that were lower than average overall, which represented broadly satisfactory achievement from students' starting points. However, standards in English were considerably lower than those in mathematics and science, representing inadequate progress in this subject. Early indications from the 2007 Year 9 tests show that standards at Key Stage 3 remain below average and, although students made broadly satisfactory progress overall, English remains an area of relative weakness.

Standards by the end of Year 11 in 2006 were exceptionally low with most students making inadequate progress, especially in English. The school has had to work hard against a culture adopted by a minority of students, especially boys, that it is, 'not cool to learn'. This work has started to pay dividends, as seen in the 2007 Year 11 results. These show a substantial rise in the proportion of students gaining five or more higher GCSE grades or the equivalent, well in excess of the target set. This improvement is also due partly to the effective monitoring of students' achievement and supporting those in danger of not reaching their potential. Achievement is excellent in art, where all students achieved a higher grade pass. However, in English, standards remain too low. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the focused teaching and support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

The school provides a safe and secure environment and students appreciate the reassurance provided by the presence of the on-site police officer. Students feel that the small amount of bullying is effectively dealt with and they are very appreciative of the help and support available. A satisfactory range of opportunities promotes moral and social development. Outstanding work in the creative arts contributes significantly to students' spiritual and cultural awareness. Behaviour is good in the majority of lessons and around the school. However, on occasions, a minority of students do not respond well to working independently or in groups and this hinders progress. Many students are involved in the growing range of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and the community, although a small minority of older students are less positive and not fully engaged. The student council is well run and is effectively responding to concerns and ideas. Despite the school's recent difficulties, the vast majority of parents and students remain very loyal to the school and value the recent improvements initiated by the senior leadership group. Students are effectively developing a range of skills that contribute

to their employment prospects through work placements, vocational courses and a new initiative focusing on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Greater emphasis on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, linked to staff development, is leading to improvements in classroom practice, although some weaknesses remain. Teachers plan lessons carefully and most match activities to students' needs. Intended outcomes are routinely shared with students. The use of assessment to improve learning has been a priority for the school and this is leading to greater consistency in target setting and in the marking of students' work. This, in turn, is contributing to students making better progress than in recent years.

A minority of lessons are very good: such lessons have brisk pace and include a variety of activities that maintain the momentum of learning. Consequently, little time is wasted in managing behaviour and students respond extremely well. Students' practice in assessing their own, and each others' work, is often very effective in maximising learning. In physical education, for example, students' skills were extended by analysing and commenting on the work of other students. Where teacher expectations are high, students rise to the challenge. In less successful lessons expectations are often too low and, in a few cases, poor classroom management leads to disruptive behaviour. Many lessons include excessive teacher talk, with limited opportunities for students to work independently or to share ideas with each other.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Recent improvements are leading to provision that is matched more closely to students' needs and aspirations. This has been particularly noticeable in the development of vocational courses for students in Years 10 and 11. Students have welcomed the introduction of the National Diploma course in ICT with approximately half of the year group on roll. There are good opportunities for work-related learning through a range of vocational courses and the programmed work experience placements. The curriculum provides good enrichment opportunities that enable students to discover and develop talents and interests. There is a high level of participation in sport and the school teams perform well.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. There is a clear commitment to inclusion that is shared by all staff, and students feel well cared for. The student counsellor, learning mentors, the school nurse, support assistants and other helpers offer outstanding support to teachers and senior leaders to ensure that every individual child is given appropriate help and guidance. The involvement of members of the local behaviour support team is highly effective and is having a positive impact on students' attitudes and behaviour. Exclusions are declining and the school's support and seclusion units respond to the needs of individuals in a caring and purposeful manner. Vulnerable students, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number in public care are particularly well supported, and as a result they gain confidence. The school has recently made improvements to systems for academic guidance.

The progress of students is now closely tracked and they are aware of their targets and how well they are doing. Students appreciate the growing emphasis on positive feedback and respond well to receiving 'praise postcards' at home. Form time is not always used effectively and the school is reviewing the role of form tutors. Child protection procedures are robust and clearly understood.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Members of the senior leadership group have worked quickly to establish an agreed approach to building on the positive work carried out over the past year. The new headteacher is successful in emphasising a common approach to all aspects of the school's work, based firmly on the academic and personal needs of each individual student. This is appreciated by students and parents alike. The good quality improvement planning clearly outlines appropriate priorities and restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities has ensured that all are aware of the important part that they play in securing improvement. The school's self-evaluation reflects a satisfactory understanding of the quality of the school's work. Leaders understand that there is some way to go in making sure that all strategies are fully embedded and closely monitored if students' standards are to be improved further. Governance is satisfactory. Although the school has experienced some difficulties in recruiting a full complement of governors, current members of the governing body are extremely committed to their work. Recently, the role of the governing body has developed to increase the focus on raising standards and governors now assist school leaders by exploring issues in detail and providing support and challenge.





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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	2

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

### 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?	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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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
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**

Inspection of Buile Hill High School, Salford M6 8RD

Following the visit of myself and the other inspectors to your school I would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

I think that Buile Hill is a satisfactory school. There are clear signs of improvement in some areas. In particular, the examination results for 2007 showed that students are now making satisfactory progress and standards are also improving in comparison to recent years. This is largely due to the hard work of the staff over the past year, in aiming to improve teaching and learning so that all students make better progress. The school is right to be proud of the GCSE results in 2007, but the Year 9 test results showed that standards had not improved quite as much at Key Stage 3, especially in English.

One of the strengths of your school is the care and support provided for you by the staff. You told us that the teachers are very caring and always have time to talk through any concerns you might have. Learning mentors and other support staff are also committed to helping you to achieve as well as you possibly can. We were impressed with the way in which you were encouraged to assess your own work in some lessons, as this helped you to understand exactly what you need to do to improve. You told us that you enjoy practical work and being actively involved in your own learning and we agree that you make good progress in lessons where this is encouraged. Your art work is particularly impressive.

Your new headteacher and the other school leaders have planned some developments to help build on the successes of the last year and so improve Buile Hill further. In order to do this, they will need to keep a close check on these developments and look at how well the changes are helping you to achieve well. We think that the school also needs to help students in Years 7, 8 and 9 reach higher standards, especially in English. Further improvements to teaching and learning are needed to make sure that progress is at least good in all subjects.

You have an important part to play in improving your school. You can help by making sure that your attendance is good and by working even harder, especially in English. We were pleased that so many of you were proud to be students at Buile Hill High School. We and your teachers want you to achieve your full potential and make the most of your time there.