

# Putteridge High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109685
<b>Local Authority</b>	LUTON LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	310062
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Sims 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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1001
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Philip Jones (Acting: Mr Bill Pollard)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gill Bryan (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Putteridge Road Luton Bedfordshire LU2 8HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01582 415791
<b>Fax number</b>	01582 419357

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Putteridge High School is a large comprehensive school situated to the north east of Luton. The previous headteacher retired at Christmas and at the time of the inspection the acting headteacher had been in post for two weeks. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups in the school is about twice the national average and the proportion for whom English is not their first language is also higher than the national level. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to that found nationally, as is the level of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is high because of the specialist provision in the school for pupils with visual impairment or physical difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory standard of education. Under the clear and visionary leadership of the newly appointed acting headteacher, the school is setting tightly focussed priorities for the improvements it knows it needs to make.

When pupils join the school, they are working at levels close to the national average. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11, standards remain broadly in line with national expectations, so progress is satisfactory. Although pupils have reached the targets set for them, the targets are not sufficiently challenging. More recently, progress of pupils in Key Stage 3 has improved and this has led to better test results in English and mathematics. There is too much variability in the performance of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE.

Pupils' personal development and well-being is good overall and pupils can be proud of the way they help and support others both within the school community and beyond. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and where improvements have been made, pupils have responded well to the greater variety of teaching and learning styles, particularly opportunities for engaging with each other in group work and assessing and evaluating each other's work. However, these practices are not consistently applied across the school and there are variations, for example, in the way pupils' work is marked.

The curriculum is a strength of the school and provision is in place for courses that suit individual needs. The vocational element has been strengthened particularly through local consortia arrangements with other training providers. Partnerships are well established and pupils are already benefiting from the choices they have.

Care guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with a number of particular strengths. Personal development is promoted very well and pupils are looked after well. Arrangements for academic guidance, however, are not sufficiently embedded across the whole school. The school can justly claim to be an inclusive school. Pupils with visual impairment and physical disabilities are integrated well in lessons and relationships between different groups of pupils are good with little bullying reported. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress because of the good quality of the additional support they receive.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior managers are working well together as a team under the head's clear leadership, although there is some way to go to ensure they are working consistently at all levels. Governance is inadequate because although the governing body is supportive, it has not so far given enough challenge for improvement.

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further. It gives satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Establish consistently good practice at all levels of leadership and management.
- Disseminate best practice in teaching, learning and assessment in order to raise the quality of the provision.
- Set more challenging targets in order to raise achievement.

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**

The achievement of pupils at Putteridge High is satisfactory overall. When they join the school at the start of Year 7, they are working at levels that are close to national expectations. By the time they leave at the end of Year 11, standards are broadly average. In lessons seen by inspectors, pupils made satisfactory progress. The progress of pupils who left at the end of the last school year was partly hampered by previous inadequate teaching experienced in Key Stage 3. Pupils more recently have made more rapid progress particularly in Key Stage 3 and this is starting to have an impact on standards.

Attainment at GCSE has been maintained over time in line with national averages including the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades (including English and mathematics). The school recognises, however, that targets need to be more challenging. There is too much variability in performance in individual subjects at GCSE. Pupils did well in English Literature and Religious Education compared to national averages but less well in art and design, drama, history and science. At Key Stage 3, test results have improved in English and mathematics and where higher attaining pupils have been targeted for additional support, as in English, they have done well. Pupils from vulnerable groups make good progress and benefit from effective support and intervention. Recent improvements to the analysis of data have enabled the school to identify pupils at risk of underachievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have a well developed awareness of moral and social responsibility, making their views known in an effective and polite manner. Pupils use the time given for spiritual reflection in assemblies very maturely. Their considerable respect for cultures other than their own is shown in their active involvement in developing the school's anti-racism policy. Pupils make very good use of the sporting activities on offer to them and they understand what makes a healthy lifestyle, which they endeavour to emulate.

Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school, although a minority of parents have expressed concern about behaviour in school. Pupils are well turned out and look smart in their uniforms. Pupils adopt safe practices and there is little bullying. Pupils make a very good contribution to the school and wider community. They have worked hard to acquire the climbing wall facility and have participated in the local area through work with the elderly, for example. They have also contributed nationally and internationally especially through fund raising for charities. Pupils enjoy their lessons where there are opportunities for active learning. Their attendance remains broadly average although the school is striving to improve this. These activities all help to prepare them adequately for adult life or further education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the most effective lessons, teachers have very good classroom control, are enthusiastic about their subject and use a range of teaching and learning styles to engage their pupils more in lessons. There is rapid progress when teachers' planning includes a good variety of tasks well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. In a good mathematics lesson, the teacher led pupils into applying their learning by explaining their understanding to their peers. Regular reference by the teacher to the examination assessment criteria enabled pupils to assess more accurately how well they were performing. A regular system of lesson observations linked to a clearly focused training programme is now beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

In less successful lessons, too much time is spent on whole class teaching at the expense of a greater variety of more exciting and active tasks. Progress is restricted when teaching does not build on pupils' earlier learning, tasks are too easy and expectations too low. Occasionally what pupils are expected to learn is not clearly defined and activities do not sufficiently develop pupils' understanding. Marking is not consistent across departments and teachers do not always give pupils clear targets and constructive advice on how to move forward. The school is aware that the effective use of assessment and target setting still varies between subjects and needs to be further developed. Too many pupils have experienced disruption to their learning due to staff absence and resulting temporary staffing arrangements.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. It fully meets statutory requirements, engages learners and encourages their good personal development. It includes the required subjects in Key Stage 3, with good provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. In Key Stage 4, recruitment to modern foreign languages is low. In the options programme overall, however, a wide range of academic and vocational courses and activities enable pupils to make relevant choices, with good opportunities to develop practical and work-related skills. A good range of extra choices is provided for higher attaining pupils.

A programme of guidance is growing steadily in scope to promote pupils' personal development, including skills for learning and teamwork. The curriculum is complemented well by a range of visits, residential, sporting and other activities that extend variety and stimulus for the pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The staff provide good support for pupils through their day-to-day supervision and well-informed advice, characterised by a strong commitment to inclusion but academic guidance is less well developed. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. The school provides good information and advice about the choices available to pupils within the school and in further education. Pupils most at risk are identified early and there is well-integrated provision for learners of English as an additional language and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

New arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress are beginning to focus teachers' attention more closely on the uses of assessment and target setting. However, current targets set for pupils are not sufficiently challenging. Some teachers are using assessment and practical targets well to inform pupils about their work and to promote learning, but practice across the school is not consistent enough to release pupils' full potential. Safeguarding arrangements are receiving rigorous attention.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The lack of clarity of purpose and cohesion in an otherwise talented senior leadership team is being successfully addressed by the good acting headteacher. Close working with senior staff from the very effective local school consortium is enabling the leadership to develop better practice in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Putteridge is an inclusive school and manages the care and support of all its pupils well. The school also has a significant number of good and developing subject leaders, though a lack of consistently good middle management skills and experience has previously slowed efforts to raise standards.

Parents have rightly highlighted issues in recruiting and retaining effective teachers and covering staff absences. Efforts to address these concerns have resulted in considerable improvement. Staff morale is high and this is reflected in a readiness to carry out an honest and largely accurate self-evaluation and adopt new and improved practices. There is considerable and valuable staff training and regular observation of teaching. However, the overall procedures for evaluating staff performance lack the necessary rigour and consistency in setting clear targets and identifying training and development needs. Governors have been consistently supportive of the school but they have not provided enough challenge for improvement.

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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?	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?	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	3
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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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	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

1 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Putteridge High School, Luton LU2 8HJ

As you know, we recently came to inspect your school and we thought you would like to know what we have said about it.

Overall the school is providing a satisfactory standard of education and we have also identified a number of good features. Your new headteacher has a very clear focus on what the school needs to do and the senior leaders are working well with her on this. Your teachers and other staff look after you well and for those of you who receive extra support, the quality is good.

You should be proud of the way you behaved in and around school when we came and of the way you take on responsibilities to help others. The school works well with other schools and colleges to make sure you have a good range of courses that suits everyone's needs.

There are other areas where we feel the school can improve further and in particular there are three things we have suggested. Firstly to make sure, under the leadership of your head that all staff who have leadership responsibilities are working more closely together so that there is a consistently good approach in the way they work.

Secondly, we want the staff to make sure that the very best things that are happening in particular departments concerning teaching and learning are shared throughout the school, so that for example, there is a consistent method adopted by all teachers in the way your work is marked.

Finally, though the test results you get are close to those in most other schools we think you could be doing better than that and have asked the school to set targets for you that are more challenging. I am confident you will play your part by rising to this challenge.

May I take this opportunity to thank those of you who took time to speak to us or help us find our way round the building when we looked lost and wish you every success in your future careers.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims (Her Majesty's Inspector)