

Martley, The Chantry High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116980
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326509
Inspection date	9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Clive Kempton HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	700
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Nott
Headteacher	Stephen Jowett
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2006
School address	Martley Worcester WR6 6QA
Telephone number	01886 887100
Fax number	01886 887102

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- Achievement and standards.
- Leadership and management.
- Personal development and well-being.
- Care, guidance and support.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, the school's own records and other documentation, and observation of the school at work. Parent's questionnaires and interviews with senior and other staff, students, parents and governors also informed the inspector's judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The Chantry High School is a heavily oversubscribed rural school, which achieved technology college status in 2005. Students come from surrounding small villages on the fringe of Worcester. Most students come from economically secure backgrounds and are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has achieved Investor in People status, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools, Green Flag Eco status, the Extended Services Stamp and is an active member of the Worcester City and Martley 14 to 19 Consortium.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Chantry High is an outstanding school that has improved significantly since its last inspection and is held in high regard by the local community. The parent of a Year 7 student commented, 'I heard wonderful things in the community about Chantry and it has lived up to expectations.'

Students enter the school with broadly average standards and make outstanding progress as they move through the school. By the time they leave in Year 11, they have attained standards that are well above the national averages. In 2008, 91% of students attained five or more A* to C grades and 75% attained this benchmark including English and mathematics, which is a significant increase on previous years. However, not enough students attained the higher A and A* grades. All students attained at least five A* to G grades. The school's own data indicate that these high standards will be maintained in the 2009 GCSE examinations. The specialist subjects are having a major impact on whole-school attainment, especially in assessment and the use of technology across the school.

There are many reasons for the high standards and the recent improvements. The new headteacher appointed two years ago has been an inspiration to staff, parents and students. One parent described his style as 'visible and approachable' and the evidence from the inspection supports this view. He has successfully focused the staff on raising standards and improving provision and is always looking for ways to improve the school. Managers at all levels have risen to his challenge and are now much more accountable for standards in their own areas. The senior leadership team is impressive and senior staff have developed robust systems for monitoring the school's work. The academic tracking of students' progress is a good example. Termly assessments are collated and used to inform staff of students who are achieving their targets and those who are falling behind. Appropriate intervention strategies are used to support these students to allow them to catch up. Students are encouraged in some subjects to email their work when complete and receive replies of how they can improve it. Staff also email some parents to let them know when their child's coursework is due. This is one of the reasons why the care, guidance and support for students are outstanding.

This care and support not only apply to academic studies but also to pastoral issues where again, the school excels. Staff really care about students and want them to be happy and succeed. The more vulnerable students who need extra help and support are cared for well. Excellent partnerships are made with outside agencies to work with school staff to help these students through difficult transitions in their lives. The Top Barn initiative is a valued example where the local police work with identified students to improve their confidence and help them make a positive contribution to the community. The school ensures that students are safe and can thrive. Of the 409 replies to the parent questionnaire as part of this inspection, 404 parents agree that their child is safe and well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are robust.

Another reason for the high standards is the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which is judged to be outstanding. The school has had some staffing issues in the past and these have been successfully resolved. Staffing is now stable and teaching is more consistent. The school has worked hard to improve the consistency of teaching through extensive staff training. Students also confirm recent improvements to teaching. In all the lessons observed during the inspection, students were engaged and motivated by the brisk pace of teaching and the good range of activities planned by the teacher. Students' behaviour was impeccable in these lessons. In all lessons, there was clear evidence of progress and enjoyment. However,

some teachers use questioning skills better than others, probing and challenging students for more complex and extended answers.

The curriculum is outstanding and constantly evolving. Students are able to study a wide range of courses, especially at Key Stage 4, that meet their individual needs. As well as GCSE courses, the school also offers a wide range of vocational subjects either on the school site or at other further education colleges in Worcester and Pershore. Some students have also started one of the new diplomas in environmental and land-based studies. Other courses available include equine studies, mobile motor vehicle mechanics or health care. Every course in the school is open to the whole ability range and many able students choose to study a vocational option as part of their curriculum choice. An innovative development for September 2009 is the school's own 'design for life' curriculum where extra-curricular as well as timetabled activities will be accredited, either by national bodies or certificated by the school itself. Examples include holiday Italian, British Sign Language, first aid, food hygiene, and environmental improvements.

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students tangibly enjoy school and grow into confident, articulate, polite young adults, able to convey their enthusiasm for their school to visitors. This can clearly be demonstrated on the school's website in the Chantry Torch News, the school's own television network. Roving reporters are constantly around the school site seeking stories and interviewing students and visitors. Students are knowledgeable about sustainable issues, grow their own vegetables, encourage the purchase of fair trade goods and avidly recycle waste paper. They have established links with schools in Tanzania and in the last two years have raised an impressive £20,000 for charity. Many take on leadership roles as prefects, head boy and girl, mentors and undertaking social duties in the reception area. Some older students are encouraged to prepare and teach parts of lessons to their peers. These opportunities develop students' self-esteem and help them to feel valued members of the school community, providing real opportunities to shape its future. They develop a sophisticated range of skills and attributes that, along with their academic ability, prepare them well for their future economic well-being. Students know how to lead an active lifestyle and what constitutes a healthy diet. They take regular exercise and large numbers attend the wide range of after-school sporting activities. Some past and present students represent county and national teams.

Attendance is good and above the national average but could be even better. One of the main concerns for the school is the number of parents who choose to take holidays in term-time, despite the contrary advice of the school. School data indicates that students absent from school do not make as much progress as those who attend regularly. Some get behind with their work and find it harder to catch up. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary and parents agree. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns in the questionnaire about bullying and this was followed up during the inspection. Students report that bullying is not a major issue in the school and any that occurs usually takes the form of name-calling. They were confident that, when reported, the issue was quickly dealt with.

Leadership and management across the school as measured by their impact are impressive and as such, have an outstanding capacity to improve provision and act on the issues raised by this inspection. However, there is still work to do to sharpen up some areas. For example, self-evaluation has developed well over the last two years and all managers are now able to make accurate assessments of their provision. On the other hand, success criteria in whole-school and subject-development planning are often too vague and lack measurable outcomes to allow the school and governors to check the impact of their actions. Governance is good and is increasingly holding the school to account for standards. Governors are fulfilling their duty to

promote community cohesion, although the school has still to fully evaluate the impact of their actions.

One parent summed up the school by writing: 'My children are confident, self-assured and happy and this is due in part to the ethos of Chantry'; another wrote, 'The school has a happy positive atmosphere.' These views are supported by the inspection evidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that self-evaluation and development planning at all management levels include more measurable criteria to check their impact.
- Increase the proportion of students gaining top grades in public examinations.
- Improve attendance and ensure that all parents are aware of the impact on attainment of taking holidays in term-time.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

10 July 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Chantry High School, Martley, WR6 6QA

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and what you could all do to make the school even better.

I think that you go to an outstanding school that has improved year on year since the last time it was inspected three years ago. You and your parents are very proud to say you go to The Chantry. I was most impressed with your manners and behaviour in lessons and around the school site and how keen you were to talk to me about your school. You are given many opportunities to develop your leadership skills through the Chantry Torch News, the prefect system, the sports leaders, and the mentoring some of you do of younger students. The amount of money you raise for charity is impressive and, along with the links with Tanzania and your focus on fair trade and preserving the environment, helps you to empathise with those less fortunate than yourselves. These opportunities are making you more confident, building your self-esteem and developing your personal skills. You attain very high standards in your academic work and this is because your teachers really care that you succeed and work hard to prepare interesting lessons for you. The quality of teaching is outstanding and so is the care and support you all receive. Every one of you is important to every adult in the school and those of you who need extra help get good support from staff in school or from other experts. Staff make sure that you follow the right courses at Key Stage 4, both in school and elsewhere and I am pleased to see that students of every ability are taking these other exciting courses. I think you have an outstanding headteacher who has inspired the other leaders and managers to work together to improve the school in the last two years.

In order to make your school even better, I have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following things.

- Make sure that the plans that senior staff and heads of department write include more measurable targets.
- Make sure more of you get top grades in public examinations.
- Make sure that all your parents are aware that if you take holidays in term-time you will get behind with your work and find it harder to catch up.

Yours faithfully

Clive Kempton HMI Her Majesty's Inspector