

Carlton le Willows School and Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122850
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	327809
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1344
Sixth form	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bob Martin
Headteacher	Mr Michael Naisbitt
Date of previous school inspection	14 December 2005
School address	Wood Lane Gedling Nottinghamshire NG4 4AA
Telephone number	0115 956 5008
Fax number	0115 956 5009

Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- achievement and standards of all students
- improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels in sustaining improvement.

Inspectors gathered evidence from the school's self-evaluation; achievement and attainment information; observation of the school at work, including a 'learning walk'; meetings with members of the school council, staff, including the senior leadership team, some subject leaders and the chair of governors; talking with students and an analysis of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors 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

This school is of above average size. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, and the number with a statement of special educational needs is well below average. The proportion of students who are eligible for free school meals is average. The school has had specialist technology status since 2002. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has several awards including Artsmark Silver, Healthy Schools Gold, Sportsmark and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Carlton-le-Willows is an outstanding school. It aims to provide an atmosphere in which all students, irrespective of their ability or background, can attain their highest potential. This aim is met very successfully. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Individual students are very well known by staff and every effort is made to remove barriers to learning, reflecting the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support students receive at the school. A parent wrote, 'My child has learning difficulties and the school has gone above and beyond anything I was expecting for my son before he started school.' Very good partnerships with other providers and support agencies also help the school to be inclusive so that every child really does matter. Staff make all the required checks to ensure the safety and protection of students.

Students are proud of their school. Their personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding because the school's expectations of students are very clear and consistent. Students' behaviour is exemplary and they say that procedures for managing behaviour are firm and fair. The rate of fixed term exclusions has been dropping over the last three years and is now relatively low. The overall attendance has been rising and is now just above the national average. These outcomes are the result of the senior leaders' attempts to provide a more suitable curriculum for the small proportion of students who are disaffected and at risk of exclusion, as well as encouragement for students to exercise responsibility. Incidents of bullying, including racial bullying, are rare and when any kind of bullying occurs it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Relationships between and within different groups, including those from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, are very harmonious. This demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting community cohesion, which is good overall. Students who have dual heritages are particularly well supported and the effect of this is evident in their positive view of themselves and in their achievements. Students have an excellent understanding of the factors contributing to healthy living and are helped to lead healthy lifestyles, for example through the choice of food and access to the recently built fitness suite. Students' high sense of enjoyment is closely linked to the excellent curriculum and enrichment activities, which have high participation rates. The performing arts and sports events engage students and the local community effectively. The school's specialist status makes a significant contribution in this regard because it enables students to maximise learning opportunities and allows staff to share expertise in science, mathematics and technology with other schools in the community. Students are also exceptionally well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Overall, teaching is good and an increasing number of lessons are outstanding. One parent wrote: 'There is a fantastic learning environment. My son has really enjoyed every day here. They are so caring and teach in fun and creative ways. It's fabulous!' The inspection evidence firmly supports this view. Regular monitoring by senior and subject leaders has helped to promote greater consistency in teachers' planning, use of information and communication technology and day-to-day assessment. However, the use of peer-assessment is not extensive and the quality of marking, though helpful in informing students about their progress, does not always guide students as to how they can improve their work. This somewhat restricts students from attaining standards that are exceptionally high.

Achievement is outstanding. Progress over time (2006 to 2008) between the end of Key Stage 2 and the end of Key Stage 4 was very good. The school's current tracking data and results

already obtained in Year 11 indicate outstanding achievement from students' average starting points. Students attain standards that are above average overall. In Key Stage 3, standards have been above average in mathematics and science for the past three years and average in English. In Key Stage 4, standards continue to be above average. In 2008, 71% of students attained five A* to C grades and 58% of students gained those grades including English and mathematics. Almost all students attained at least five GCSEs. In the specialist subjects of mathematics and science, students obtained above average results. In design and technology, the results were average and the school missed its specialist target by a narrow margin, reflecting the previous staffing difficulties in this subject, which are now resolved. Staff are realistic in their aspiration for students to attain exceptionally high standards by the time they finish in Year 11. Modifications to the curriculum and teachers' access to a wide range of professional development, including contributions by advanced skills teachers, are milestones reached already for this aspiration. Senior leaders set high expectations and the identification of challenging targets for 2009, if met, will represent significant improvement in students' standards and progress, especially in English and mathematics. A small number of students who find learning difficult underachieved in 2008. Achievement is improving significantly this year due to an increased awareness of individual students' needs and rigorous monitoring of their progress. Consequently, the school's current tracking data shows that the majority of these students are on course to meet the targets set for them, representing outstanding progress.

At the heart of the school's success is the quality of leadership and management, which is outstanding. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has brought about significant improvements to the school over the past few years. His drive and determination are shared by the senior leadership team and governors and there is a strong sense of common purpose across the school. Self-evaluation is evident at all management levels and it is rigorous. This helps to inform the school development plan, which is also based on wide consultations, so that it identifies the right priorities for continuing improvement. Governance is outstanding. Governors have first hand experience of school life and play an active part in being critical friends and hold the school to account extremely well. Very astute management of resources enables the school to provide excellent value for money. Capacity for improvement is excellent too, reflecting the improvement since the last inspection and the rise in students' achievement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is outstanding. An exceptional level of care, guidance and support provide students with a stimulating environment in which to learn and thrive. The sixth form is open-entry and a large percentage of students come from other schools, in addition to those continuing their education from Year 11 in the main school. Retention rates are high and those staying on to complete their studies in Year 13 make exceptional progress from their overall below average starting points and attain high standards. There is excellent leadership and management, which ensures that careful monitoring and evaluation sustains improvement. Teaching in many subjects is excellent. Staff set high expectations and monitor students' progress closely. Intervention arrangements are responsive to each student's needs and are effective. The curriculum is good, offering a wide range of A- and AS-level courses and a growing number of vocational options are now better suited to meet students' needs. A new sixth form centre is being built and the school is well positioned to widen its curricular provision further through the introduction of diplomas. These new developments have yet to have an impact. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They lead healthy

lifestyles and participate in a range of sporting and cultural activities, which enrich their lives. Students are also very good role models for younger students. Students take responsibility seriously and play an active part in improving the sixth form and supporting the rest of the school, as well as making a very positive contribution to the wider community. A high proportion of students move on to higher education, employment or training. The sixth form provides excellent value for money and has excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers use marking to make explicit to students how they can improve their work.
- Ensure that the wider curricular provision in the sixth form matches the high level of performance shown in the current academic courses.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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	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?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	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	1	1
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	1	
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	

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

26 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Carlton-le-Willows School, Gedling, NG4 4AA

Many thanks for helping my colleague and I with the inspection of your school. We were extremely impressed with your warm welcome, friendliness and courtesy. We enjoyed talking with you. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection.

The overall effectiveness of the school, including that of the sixth form, is outstanding. Leaders and managers, supported by all staff, are doing an excellent job and have brought about significant improvement since the last inspection in December 2005. The quality of care, guidance and support you receive is excellent and so it is no wonder that you feel so proud of your school. Your contribution to the school and the local community is impressive. You attain above average standards by the end of Year 9 and above average GCSE results, including in English and mathematics. This represents very good progress from your starting points in Year 7 and your current progress indicates that your achievement is excellent. The factors that contribute to this achievement are the outstanding curriculum and enrichment activities; the good, and increasingly outstanding, quality of teaching; and your own exceptional behaviour and motivation to learn. Relationships between students who come from different social and ethnic backgrounds are excellent. This reflects the importance the staff and governors place on valuing you as individuals and as members of the school and wider community. Consequently, your personal development and well-being are excellent. The staff at the school are highly committed to making sure you have the best possible opportunities to develop knowledge and skills that prepare you for the next stage in your life.

The construction of a new sixth form centre looks very promising and we have asked senior leaders to make sure that choices of vocational and diploma courses lead to excellent results to match those already obtained in the subjects currently offered. We have also asked that teachers' marking of your work shows clearly how you can improve. You can help by working with your teachers and acting on their advice.

All the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector