

Caterham High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102849
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	335979
Inspection dates	4–5 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1210
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	301
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Tyne
Headteacher	Alan Atkins
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
School address	Caterham Avenue Ilford IG5 0QW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 50 lessons, and observed 50 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. No meetings were held with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at students' books, the school improvement plan, school monitoring reports, student progress data and other documentation. They analysed 58 questionnaires from parents, 123 from students and 17 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the school's work in addressing the legacy of underachievement in English
- how well the school's assessment data are used to inform teaching and support the learning of all groups of students
- the impact of the school's sports specialism in promoting community cohesion
- the extent to which outcomes for sixth form students support the school's assertion that overall effectiveness of the sixth form is now good.

Information about the school

This is a large school with a sixth form that is above average in size. The majority of its students come from minority ethnic backgrounds and many speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. An on-site hearing impaired unit caters for 20 students, including some who need signing support. The school is a specialist sports college.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Caterham High provides a satisfactory standard of education. Many aspects of its work are good. Students describe the school as friendly with good relationships between staff and students. They feel well cared for and supported by the adults who work with them. Both students and parents value the opportunities for a large proportion of students to be involved in school sports teams or school productions. The atmosphere in school is calm and in the vast majority of cases students behave well in lessons.

Attainment in English by the end of Year 11 was well below average in 2008 and 2009. As a result of a concerted drive to target underperformance, improvement in English has accelerated this year and students are well on track to achieve outcomes that are close to national averages by the end of this year. Attainment in mathematics has been broadly average but is now above average, and most students are making consistently good progress in this subject. Given that students join the school with standards that are slightly below average in Year 7, their progress and achievement are satisfactory overall.

There is some good teaching in the school and where this takes place students are enthusiastic and enjoy themselves because they are actively involved in their own learning. Students work well together and sometimes get opportunities to assess their own work. However, teachers' expectations of the standards that students can achieve are not always sufficiently ambitious, and in their planning teachers focus too much on activities in lessons rather than the progress students should be making. Limited use of assessment data means that work does not always match students' needs, and marking does not always give the guidance students need about the next steps for improvement. The good practice seen in some departments, such as physical education and performing arts, is not yet widely shared, and not all teachers understand clearly what makes a lesson outstanding so that students can make the maximum progress. As a result, more able students in particular are not always sufficiently challenged.

The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that meets students' needs well. Increased opportunities for students in Year 10 mean that they can now access a wider range of courses to match their aspirations and abilities. Changes to the curriculum in Years 8 and 9 are beginning to have a positive impact on students' progress. In general, support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is sound and they make satisfactory progress. However, hearing impaired students make consistently good progress because of the well-targeted specialist support and care they receive. Care, guidance and support are a strong feature of the school's work and, in this atmosphere, students feel confident that they are safe. The school meets all its statutory requirements for safeguarding and has excellent systems in

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place for child protection.

Since the new leadership structure has been in place, the impact of the improvements made over the last academic year has accelerated. As a result of better self-evaluation the leadership team is more aware of strengths and weaknesses in provision. However, monitoring of teaching does not always result in specific improvement targets for teachers that are systematically followed through to evaluate impact. The school's specialist status as a sports college is making a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion, for example through the provision of fitness and sports coaching facilities that are shared with the community. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that staff:
 - consistently use the good information the school has about students' prior attainment and capability when planning work
 - consistently plan tasks that match each student's needs and interests from the outset of the lesson
 - bring the standard of weaker marking up to the level of the best.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - establishing and implementing sharper monitoring systems so that key areas for development identified as a result of formal observations are more systematically followed through.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Standards seen in lessons and students' books were broadly average and rising, confirming the outcomes shown in the school's own data. In the majority of lessons seen during this inspection students were judged to be making satisfactory progress, and it was often good. For example, Year 8 students worked well in pairs in a science lesson applying their knowledge of electromagnetism to find out how Maglev trains work. Year 11 students demonstrated good analytical skills in religious education when they used the examination board's assessment criteria to assess each other's work. In many classes, hearing impaired students were seen to be engaged well in learning because of good visual resources backed up by effective personalised support. Because of a sound understanding of their needs, students who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. However, too much learning remains satisfactory because teaching strategies do not always purposefully engage students. As a consequence, more able students do not always make the progress they are capable of. In a few cases, learning was inadequate due to lack of opportunities for students to purposefully interact. Where there is pace in the lessons, coupled with individual short-term targets, students' motivation to learn is good. This was particularly evident in some of the physical education and performing arts lessons seen.

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During the inspection, students behaved well around the school and in lessons. They are polite and courteous to visitors. Students of all ages and different backgrounds were seen to mix well together. Many older students coach younger pupils from feeder primary schools as a part of their sports leadership accreditation. Exclusions have gone down as a result of the good care and pastoral support in place. Largely as a result of the school's sports college status, students have plentiful opportunities to develop their sporting prowess and fitness potential. The majority respond well to this and adopt healthy lifestyles as a result. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A rich curriculum provides plentiful opportunities for students to attribute meaning to experience, and to take part in musical productions. Attendance has improved from satisfactory to good because of the impact of effective procedures that are consistently applied and monitored. Students develop their numeracy and literacy skills in a wide range of areas and this helps to prepare them for future education and the world of work. However, students' independent learning skills are less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teaching was good or better in almost half of the lessons observed during the inspection. In the better lessons, appropriate challenge moved students on at a brisk pace. Teachers used information and communication technology and other resources well; they encouraged collaboration in paired and group work, and inspired students to produce work of which they could be proud. Less effective lessons, including some that were inadequate, were characterised by extended periods of the teacher talking to the class. This resulted in students becoming passive learners. In addition, the good assessment data available were not used to match lesson activities to the varying needs of the students. The quality of assessment and marking is not yet consistently good within, and between, curriculum areas. However, an expanding and responsive curriculum is enhancing choice and opportunity for students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The vocational element is improving and is increasingly well matched to the needs and aspirations of Caterham's students. The impressive range of enrichment activities makes a strong contribution to promoting students' health and fitness. Students are well cared for and supported. The school is very effective in identifying needs and swiftly organising appropriate support. For example, a small group of hearing impaired students were making good progress in GCSE English literature as a result of well-targeted personalised support. Most of the support for these students is provided in mainstream classes, showing that the school is a very inclusive organisation. Vulnerable students often thrive because they can take risks in the caring atmosphere that envelops them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Improvements in provision that took place during the last academic year are already having a positive impact on outcomes for students, for example in improved attainment in English at Key Stage 4. Under the leadership of a very experienced headteacher and competent senior leadership team, the changes brought about have taken place smoothly. The leadership team knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Leaders have undertaken a sound analysis of the school's performance and are setting increasingly challenging targets. Expectations of both staff and students are high and current planning reflects this. Middle leaders, through their 'mini-SEFs' (self-evaluation forms), are increasingly involved in driving the school forward through accurate and rigorous self-evaluation. Monitoring systems for all aspects of the school's work are in place, but they have yet to be fully embedded or linked to performance management

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and professional development for individual staff.

Governors support the school well and do a good job of ensuring that safeguarding policies and practices are in place and meet government requirements, although they are not yet fully effective in challenging the senior leadership regarding school performance. Close partnerships with a wide range of education providers are a strength of the school's work and have had a positive impact on curriculum development. Parental engagement is good. For example, the school has been successful in engaging a group of parents on developing an equalities action plan. The 'believe and achieve' programme for a group of 20 targeted boys has had a positive impact on their personal development, and is one of many good examples of community cohesion. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in relation to students' personal development. However, the school recognises that it has not yet done enough to refine its analysis of the performance of different groups of students. Senior staff and governors deploy resources adequately and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students' attainment is broadly average and most have been making the expected progress in relation to their capability. However, the majority were making good progress in the lessons observed because teaching in the sixth form has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good. Attendance is average, although better in Year 13. The school has taken appropriate action to improve attendance in Year 12. Students make a positive contribution to school activities, in particular helping younger

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students with their reading and numeracy. An increasing number of students progress well from the sixth form and continue their education at university.

In lessons, students are frequently challenged and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Occasionally, however, teaching does not build on students' prior learning well enough. The sixth form provides a good range of AS and A2 courses. The addition of a number of vocational programmes meets the needs of an increasingly wide range of students. Students say they are well supported and get good advice and guidance to make informed choices about their futures. Leaders and managers share ambitious improvement plans with staff. Recent restructuring of the sixth form is beginning to have a positive impact on students' learning and progress, although the improvements have yet to have an impact on students' attainment.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and pleased with the education their children receive. A small minority expressed some concerns about the way the school deals with challenging behaviour. However, the inspection team found that behaviour was managed well. A small minority also say that the school does not help their child to have a healthy lifestyle. However, inspectors found that the school is strong on health promotion strategies, driven effectively by its specialist status as a sports college. A small proportion also feels that the school does not take sufficient notice of their concerns. The school has responded to this by creating the full-time post of parent support adviser, which is now working well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Caterham High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 58 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	26	37	64	3	5	3	5
The school keeps my child safe	7	12	44	76	5	9	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	24	40	69	2	3	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	14	41	71	7	12	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	4	7	44	76	6	10	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	4	7	41	71	6	10	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	12	36	62	13	22	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	16	39	67	3	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	12	34	59	7	12	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	14	35	60	6	10	7	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	9	30	52	10	17	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	5	9	43	74	2	3	4	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	21	36	62	6	10	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



6 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Caterham High School, Ilford IG5 0QW

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school and also for telling us what you thought about the school. We now know that you enjoy school and work hard, as seen in your improving results and good attendance. We judged the school to be satisfactory overall, although we have highlighted some good elements. Your attainment in English was low for a while, but now you are on track to achieve results that are in line with the national average. Attainment in mathematics is better and most of you make good progress in this subject. Overall, your achievement is satisfactory. In the main, this is due to the sound teaching and the good curriculum and care, guidance and support the school provides. The achievement of sixth form students is satisfactory overall.

You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. We saw some good examples of the contributions you make to your school community. In addition, we were impressed with the number of students who are working to achieve the junior sports leadership award. The headteacher leads and manages the school soundly and is well supported by his senior leaders.

We have asked the school to improve teaching further by ensuring that teachers:

- consistently use the good information the school has about your prior attainment and capability when planning work
- consistently plan tasks that match each student's needs and interests from the outset of the lesson
- bring the standard of weaker marking up to the level of the best.

We have also asked the school to improve the way in which the quality of teaching is monitored so that teachers have sharper individual targets for improvement.

You can help the school to further improve by working hard to achieve your targets and participating fully in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead inspector

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