

Turton High School Media Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105253
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336459
Inspection dates	25–26 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Janet Palmer HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
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	1674
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Julian Page
Headteacher	Mr John Porteous
Date of previous school inspection	4 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 43 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including 215 parental questionnaires.

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

- attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, particularly in mathematics
- effective use of information and communication technology to promote independent learning
- attainment and progress in the sixth form
- leadership and management of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Turton is a larger than average 11–18 years comprehensive school with specialist media arts college status. The school serves a generally affluent area of Bolton with some pockets of disadvantage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below average. Most students in the main school are of White British heritage but there is a large number from minority ethnic backgrounds in the sixth form. The school population is very stable with very few students joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times. The school holds a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Eco Schools and International Schools. There is extended school provision that is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Turton is a good school characterised by outstanding levels of care and support. It is held in high regard by parents and carers. Comments from parents such as, 'my son has thrived both as a person and as a student', and, 'both of my children have received excellent education and have felt part of a safe and supportive community', are typical of the views expressed to inspectors.

Students' attainment in GCSE examinations has improved year-on-year and is consistently above the national average. However, poorer than usual performance in mathematics in 2009 led to a decline in the percentage achieving five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. The school has identified raising achievement in mathematics as a priority and is implementing a programme for improvement; the effects of this can be seen in the better progress of current students. The quality of teaching and learning is good; students enjoy their lessons and achieve well. Vulnerable and disadvantaged students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive outstanding support and as a result, they, too, make good progress. The school's specialist status has made a significant contribution to the good curriculum. The school has introduced the diploma in media and creative arts which is proving popular. The wide range of academic and vocational options and a thriving programme of extra-curricular activities ensure students' needs and interests are met.

The quality of teaching is good overall and particularly successful where teachers plan appropriately challenging lessons that engage and interest the students. When the quality of teaching is not as high, the pace is too slow for some students and some are not clear about what they have to do.

Students enjoy school and are keen to learn. Their thoughtful and mature behaviour creates a positive climate around the school. The outstanding care, guidance and support contribute to students' good personal development and well-being. The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. They are keen to take part in, and influence the provision of, a wide range of sporting activities and support the school's healthy eating agenda.

The leadership's vision and ambitions for the school are clear and communicated well to staff. Senior managers have begun to set realistic and challenging targets for students' attainment and progress. However, systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning lack rigour and there is insufficient sharing with the whole staff of some of the good and excellent teaching in the school. Systems to ensure the safeguarding of students are outstanding.

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for

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development. The school has effectively addressed the areas for improvement at the last inspection and there has been a steady improvement in overall standards and achievement. Hence, capacity for further improvement is good. Links with a range of local, national and international communities make an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Resources are effectively deployed and value for money is good. The sixth form is good, attracting students from across the town and beyond. Sixth form leaders and managers take considerable care to ensure students are well matched to courses. Students attain well, with more achieving A and B grades at GCE A level in 2009 than ever before. Students' progress towards meeting their personal ambitions and aspirations is good with the great majority moving on to their first choices in higher education. Teachers demonstrate considerable subject expertise and students enjoy the good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of teaching that is good and outstanding by:
 - improving the rigour with which leaders and managers monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
 - sharing good practice in teaching and learning across the school
 - ensuring that lessons are planned to meet the individual needs of students more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Overall, students' attainment is above average. The school has been successful in securing improvements in results at the end of Key Stage 4 over three years. However, there have been inconsistencies in mathematics. In 2008, the percentage achieving GCSE A* to C grades in mathematics was higher than the national average but this was not sustained in 2009 when some students' grades fell to below average.

Students make good progress overall, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The very large majority are keen to do well, demonstrate good attitudes to learning in lessons and no groups of students underachieve.

The extent to which students feel safe is outstanding; this is supported by the views of their parents and carers. Students' understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. They demonstrate commitment to improving the school and wider community through activities such as the student council, UNICEF group, musical and drama performance and through participation in events such as World Food day. Students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is enhanced by their participation in a range of cultural activities such as Black History Week and visits to various places of worship. Students are generally prepared well for their future economic well-being; they are confident in managing their lives and as a result, a very high proportion move on to further training and education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and most have high expectations of their students. The best lessons are planned well so that they meet students' differing needs and in many lessons information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to promote independent learning. However, a minority of teachers miss the chance to help pupils make rapid progress by not making lessons sufficiently challenging or helping students understand clearly what is expected of them. Students learn and behave well in the lessons where they are engaged fully, where teaching is energetic and enthusiastic and a wide range of activities is provided. Good use of questioning and increasing opportunities for independent learning further contribute to students' good progress. In most lessons seen, teachers made good use of assessment data and students knew what level they were working at and what they needed to do in order to improve, although this was not fully consistent in all lessons.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is developing well leading to more creative and imaginative provision. For example, Year 9 students can undertake a GCSE in astronomy, BTEC in music and the short course GCSE in religious education. Key Stage 4 offers a broad

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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range of academic and vocational options, working collaboratively with other schools, colleges and employers to ensure a personalised curriculum to meet individual needs. All students have access to a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports and the performing arts. Talented students benefit from technology and science days as well as Summer Schools.

Very effective transition arrangements ensure that students who join Year 7 or other year groups, settle into their new school quickly and smoothly. Well informed and specialist staff ensure the most vulnerable students are very well supported. Excellent relationships with a range of external agencies help to contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support the students receive.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels have a shared vision and an understanding of the key priorities for the school. The senior team is providing the capacity to focus more effectively on improving teaching and learning, particularly in mathematics. However, the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are not always sufficiently robust. There is an effective programme of professional development for all staff but advantage is not always taken of existing expertise among the staff by sharing best practice.

All forms of discrimination and barriers to learning are tackled very effectively and the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is outstanding. Community cohesion is very effectively encouraged within the school, local and wider communities. The school has an inclusive ethos; students with disabilities integrate fully in the life of the school; many students are involved in inter-generational links through Age Concern; and as part of the work of the international schools initiative, students communicate with students around the world helping to develop their good understanding of diversity. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. The school is a high quality practice leader in the local authority providing training and support in best practice on health and safety, risk assessment and child protection. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements well, has constructive relationships with staff and holds the school fully to account. Partnerships to promote learning and well-being are outstanding as is the engagement of the school with parents and carers. Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school's leadership team, their views are fully taken into account and high quality

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information is provided in order to involve them in decisions about students' individual learning, well-being and development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The sixth form provides a good, supportive education where students attain well and make good progress. Teaching in the sixth form is good overall and at times, outstanding. The best teachers have excellent subject knowledge; their lessons are interesting, engaging and well structured to ensure progress is rigorously assessed and students have an accurate picture of how well they are doing.

The academic curriculum meets the needs of the students who choose to attend the sixth form at Turton and is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular options and enrichment lessons. The good care and guidance students receive is highly valued. The leadership and management of the sixth form ensure smooth day-to-day running and good outcomes for students. Robust tracking procedures inform teaching, learning and assessment very effectively. Intervention strategies are quickly put into place to support students who require extra help. Communication between parents and carers is excellent and students find the strong links very supportive.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

One in eight parents and carers gave their views and the great majority of responses were supportive of the school and its management. A minority did not feel that the school helped them to support their child's learning and 8% of those who responded did not feel that the school helped their child to have a healthy lifestyle, although inspectors judged this outcome to be outstanding. Ninety six per cent of those who expressed a view were happy overall with their child's experience at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Turton High School Media Arts College 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 215 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,674 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	109	51	99	46	6	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	98	46	113	53	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	100	47	103	48	9	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	45	104	48	10	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	42	114	53	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	36	115	53	17	8	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	71	33	123	57	16	7	1	0
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)	94	44	103	48	6	3	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	84	39	115	53	7	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	38	112	52	13	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	33	125	58	5	2	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	113	53	94	44	4	2	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	57	84	39	7	3	1	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



27 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Turton High School Media Arts College, Bolton, BL7 9LT

After our visit to your school, I would like to share our findings with you and thank you for your friendly welcome and for taking time to talk to us.

Turton is a good school with a good sixth form. In examinations and in lessons you achieve well; you make good progress academically and some aspects of your personal development and well-being are outstanding. You told us that as a result of the excellent care, guidance and support you receive you feel very safe and secure in school. Your understanding of healthy lifestyles and take up of healthy options and activities are excellent. The school's media arts status has enhanced the curriculum and helps you to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. We were very impressed by your links with other schools around the world and your very good understanding of cultural diversity. Many of your teachers have excellent subject expertise and you engage very well with the lessons. There are very good strategies in place to identify those who need extra help. The leadership and management of the school and sixth form are good. There are now more vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and opportunities to take award-bearing courses in Year 9.

In order that the school can help you to continue to progress well we have recommended the following:

Increase the amount of teaching that is good and outstanding by:

- improving the rigour with which leaders and managers monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
- sharing good practice in teaching and learning across the school
- ensuring that lessons are planned to meet the individual needs of students more effectively.

You are rightly proud to be a member of Turton High School and Media Arts College. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Janet Palmer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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