

Parrs Wood High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105556
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	336517
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael McIlroy 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	1854
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Woods
Headteacher	Mr Tarun Kapur CBE
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2007
School address	Wilmslow Road East Didsbury Manchester M20 5PG
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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 several tutorial sessions. They held meetings with nominated staff, four groups of students, the interim executive board and representatives of the school's partners. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at relevant policies and documentation, improvement planning, marking and assessment procedures, questionnaires returned from students and staff, and 120 questionnaires returned from parents and carers. The school's single central record was also inspected.

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

- the progress of students in Key Stages 3 and 4, particularly in mathematics
- the attendance of students
- the quality of teaching and learning
- the school's curriculum
- the leadership and management of the school.

Information about the school

Parrs Wood High School is a larger than average school and serves a diverse community in south Manchester. Students join the school from a large number of primary schools. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups is twice the average and just over one quarter of students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has a specialist unit that caters for the needs of hearing impaired students. A higher than average percentage of students is eligible for free school meals. The school was placed in special measures in November 2007. Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing, governance and the leadership of the school.

The school is a specialist technology college and holds the International School Award and the ICT Mark.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school is now providing a satisfactory standard of education.

The outstanding leadership of the executive headteacher has been the driving force behind the steady improvement of the school. Joining the school shortly after it was placed into special measures, he rapidly began to improve senior leadership, management and staffing structures. These changes, along with carefully selected new appointments and specific training programmes, have improved the quality of leadership and management so that this is now satisfactory. While senior leadership is good, middle management is satisfactory as many middle managers are still growing into their revised roles or are new to the school. The executive headteacher has also increased sharply the accountability of staff and ensured that the school is focused on raising standards and improving the progress that students make.

The achievement of students is satisfactory. Standards are average. In 2009 overall results at Key Stage 4 dipped to broadly average due to weak results in mathematics. The school reacted quickly and successfully to this. Results in GCSE mathematics for the current academic year, obtained by students' early entry to examinations, already exceed those achieved in 2009. This rapid improvement means that the progress made by students, including those from minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Students with a statement of special educational needs make very good progress. In the good sixth form, which is effectively led, students make good progress. Contributing to the satisfactory progress made by students is the improved curriculum. It meets the needs of students of different abilities well by offering a broad range of academic and vocational subjects and both traditional and alternative qualifications. This has enabled less academically inclined students to succeed and make better progress. A further factor that has improved the curriculum, and also teaching, is the good links with two partner schools. Staff from these have shared their curriculum expertise with the school. Teachers have visited these schools in turn to observe good practice in teaching.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some outstanding teaching but there is also some which is inadequate. Assessment procedures are satisfactory as there is too much variation in how students' work is marked. Not enough marking offers students sufficiently clear guidance on the next steps to take to improve their learning. The care, guidance and support which students receive are satisfactory. Students are adequately supervised around the school site and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well integrated into school life. Behaviour is satisfactory. Although a small

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minority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires are concerned about how the school deals with poor behaviour, students spoken to by inspectors commented on how it has improved since the school was placed into special measures. Students feel safe at school and are confident that any worries they share with staff will be addressed. They understand how to lead suitably healthy lifestyles and through charity fundraising and participation in school activities make a satisfactory contribution to the community. Attendance is average but the proportion of students who are persistently absent is above average. This and their satisfactory achievement mean that students are adequately prepared for the challenges of future study and work.

The governance of the school by the interim executive board is satisfactory and the school provides adequate value for money. Given its satisfactory leadership, accurate self-evaluation, the improved curriculum and the recent improvement standards, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and standards by improving the quality of teaching to that of good by:
 - eradicating inadequate teaching
 - ensuring that work in each class is consistently matched to the different needs of students
 - building on existing good practice to ensure that marking is consistently good and helps students to know what they must do next to improve their work.
- Improve attendance by working closely with persistent absentees and their families. The school should aim to raise overall attendance to 93% by the end of the academic year.
- Strengthen leadership by developing the leadership and management skills of middle leaders.
- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The attainment of students is average. Teachers' assessments and inspection evidence indicate that in 2009 standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 were above average. In Key Stage 4 in 2009 the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSEs was average as was the percentage of those who gained five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Students performed much more strongly in English than in mathematics. The results of more recent GCSE examinations show that the weaknesses in mathematics have been redressed. This is due to better teaching and very good temporary leadership of the subject. The use of assessment data has also improved and weaknesses are identified

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quickly and promptly acted upon. Consequently, the progress made by students is satisfactory. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. Those with a statement of special educational needs, including hearing impaired students, make very good progress due to the good support which they receive.

Students feel safe at school. They are clear that any problems they have can be shared with staff and that this will be acted upon. Students spoke favourably of a newly introduced confidential computer system through which they can inform the school of any concerns. Behaviour is satisfactory. It is better in classrooms than it is around the school where there is some boisterousness in corridors. The number of fixed-term exclusions has increased but this is a result of the school's more consistent application of its behaviour policy. Students' satisfactory understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle enables them to make informed choices about exercise and healthy foods at lunchtimes. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and local community. They have opportunities to serve on the school council and raise funds for charity, such as for a recent earthquake appeal. There are also some good links with local care homes. Students' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, although their moral and social development is stronger. Students are adequately prepared for the world of work. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills and teamworking skills are well developed but attendance is average. Although the school's systems for improving attendance and punctuality have improved, the proportion of students who are persistently absent is too high.

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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

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

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	
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is outstanding but there is also a small proportion which is inadequate. Relationships between adults and students are generally good. ICT is mostly used well in lessons. Teachers plan to a common format but work is not always sufficiently well matched to the different abilities of students in each class. Learning objectives are routinely displayed at the start of lessons and where teaching is good or better these are frequently referred back to. The pace of teaching is satisfactory and in some lessons time is not always well used. Inattention and some low-level disruption slows the pace of learning in a few lessons. There is often too much talk by the teacher and not enough involvement of students in their learning. A feature of good and better teaching is the effective use of questioning. This is used to capture and hold students' attention but also to help them develop and articulate their own thinking. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and there are useful innovations, such as the use by students of green, amber or red cards to indicate how well they understand their tasks and new learning. Most students are well informed about the National Curriculum levels and grades they are working at and aiming towards. However, they are less clear on what it is they have to do to achieve these targets. There is wide variation in the quality of marking. Some is very good, but not enough marking gives students consistently clear guidance on the next steps they must take to improve their work.

The broad and balanced curriculum has contributed well to improvements in students' achievement. The different needs of students are well catered for by the good range of academic and vocational courses. Good opportunities exist for older students to attend a local college. Students have appropriate opportunities to enter examinations early and then to study for additional, higher qualifications. Tutorial times are appropriately used to teach aspects of personal and social development. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, such as fashion shows and sports clubs, and these are well attended. Effective intervention strategies, such as booster classes, exist which have helped bring about the improvement in students' progress in mathematics. The curriculum continues to evolve, partly with the help of 'young leaders' who work with a number of different faculties to provide students' views on the quality of the subject. Recently, courses in psychology and engineering have been added. The school's 'home-school' curriculum provides good distance learning provision for a number of students who are unable to attend mainstream school. The curriculum is also modified appropriately for several classes of less-able learners in Year 7 through the school's primary model approach.

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The care, guidance and support students receive are satisfactory. A new pastoral support team is in place. Students' individual needs are usually identified early but the quality of support for students in classes varies. Transition arrangements with primary schools are good and there are a number of strategies to support vulnerable students, such as the 'buddy' system. A good example of this is the dedicated group of student 'buddies' who support a visually impaired student.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher's determined leadership has both inspired and supported other school leaders and helped build a strong sense of teamwork and shared purpose among staff. Weaknesses in teaching are being rigorously tackled. Robust monitoring arrangements exist and these have helped improve teaching and learning and increased teachers' accountability for the progress which students make. The school is strongly committed to promoting equality and diversity and recent improvements in the use of data have enabled it to begin evaluating the performance of different groups of students. Middle leadership is satisfactory. Middle leaders are beginning to assume greater responsibility for the areas they lead. The school's specialism makes a satisfactory contribution to the school's work. Following the restructuring of staffing, the technology faculty is beginning to extend its activities throughout the school, for example through themed 'immersion days'. The school engages satisfactorily with parents and carers through questionnaires, newsletters and meetings. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students comply with current regulations. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It knows its own community well and is in the early stages of building links with other schools in different communities. The interim executive board, previously focused on specific aspects of improving the school, is now appropriately expanding its membership to improve its oversight of the school work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3

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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	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The leadership of the sixth form is good and is well focused on improvements in academic results. Teachers' skills are thoughtfully and well deployed to bring about improvements in learning. There are good procedures for monitoring and tracking the progress of students and the effectiveness of subjects. Students make good progress in their learning. In 2009, 84% of students entered for examinations at A level achieved an A to C grade, which was an improvement on the previous year. In a number of subjects there was a 100% pass rate. The majority of students progress onto higher education. Students attend well and are punctual to lessons. They make good use of opportunities to exercise responsibility, such as being sixth form councillors, acting as mentors to younger students and as ambassadors to other schools. They are also heavily involved in assisting in the 'immersion days' in the main school. Teaching is good and the strong pastoral system provides very strong care, guidance and support for students. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are well matched to the needs of students.

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

Parents and carers returned 120 questionnaires. A very large majority were of the view that their children enjoy school and that they were happy with their children's

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experience at the school. A small minority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires considered that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors disagree with this view and found that behaviour was satisfactory overall. A few parents and carers considered that the school did not help them to support their children's learning. Inspectors found that the school's work in this area was satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Parrs Wood 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,854 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	42	64	53	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	37	70	58	6	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	38	62	52	11	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	28	64	53	17	14	5	4
The teaching is good at this school	23	19	79	66	14	12	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	16	69	58	24	20	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	21	73	61	17	14	2	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)	39	33	61	51	13	11	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	28	69	58	16	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	22	58	48	23	19	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	19	71	59	15	13	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	40	33	59	49	14	12	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	33	63	53	13	11	2	2

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.



11 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Parrs Wood High School, Manchester, M20 5PG

Thank you for your help and the politeness with which you greeted us when we inspected your school recently. We would particularly like to thank those of you with whom we spoke during our visit. We came to your school to find out how it is doing. This is what we found.

- Your school is now a satisfactory school and no longer requires special measures.
- Attainment is average and the progress you make in your learning is satisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the school is satisfactory, overall, and the executive headteacher provides outstanding leadership.
- The sixth form is good.
- The curriculum at your school is good and offers you lots of choices in terms of subjects.
- You feel safe in school. You particularly like the new computer system through which you can tell the school in confidence about any worries or concerns you may have.
- Your attendance and behaviour are satisfactory.

We have asked the executive headteacher, staff and the interim executive board to make a number of improvements to help your school to improve. These are as follows.

- Raise standards by making all teaching as good as the best teaching which we saw.
- Improve attendance, particularly that of students who have a lot of time off school.
- Strengthen the leadership of the school by providing more training for middle leaders.

You can help your school to improve by ensuring that you come to school every day.

Once again, many thanks for the kindness and help that you showed us when we visited your school.

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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