

North Chadderton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105737
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	336552
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1578
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Garvin Crabtree
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Howse
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2007
School address	Chadderton Hall Road Chadderton Oldham OL9 0BN
Telephone number	0161 624 9939
Fax number	0161 628 5995
Email address	moffice@northchadderton.oldham.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in classes, observed 40 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 114 parents and carers.

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

- the evidence of past and current attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment across subjects
- the extent to which the innovations in the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support, meet students' needs and interests
- outcomes and provision in the sixth form
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in tackling key areas of weakness.

Information about the school

North Chadderton became a foundation school in 2008. It is a larger than average school with a sixth form. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion from minority ethnic groups has increased in recent years and is average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school is on a split site and is due to be rebuilt. It is a business and enterprise college and has the Healthy Schools Award.

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

North Chadderton is a satisfactory school. Students' attainment is broadly average and has risen in line with national trends over the last three years. The school's assessment data show that there is likely to be further improvement in 2010. The learning and progress of students is satisfactory. Achievement in the main school was inadequate until 2009 due to weaknesses in assessment, particularly in English and mathematics. Students' progress was not tracked closely enough and assessment was not moderated effectively to ensure that it was sufficiently accurate. As a result, teaching was not targeted precisely enough at the needs of underachieving students. Systems of monitoring and evaluation were not rigorous enough in identifying weaknesses in teaching, assessment and students' progress.

Since the beginning of the school year these weaknesses have been tackled effectively and have resulted in improved progress towards ambitious targets. The new tracking system provides accurate and frequent analysis of students' progress and is based securely on moderated assessment by teachers. Early GCSE results for 2010 in science and mathematics, early GCSE results in English and English coursework grades show significant improvement in the core subjects compared with the previous year. However, students continue to underachieve in mathematics across all year groups, due to inconsistency in the quality of teaching and assessment. Students make good progress in the sixth form and increased numbers have succeeded in gaining entry to higher education.

Teaching and the use of assessment are satisfactory. The majority of teaching is good or better but the quality is inconsistent across subjects. There is much good practice in the use of assessment and marking but it is not sufficiently widespread. The curriculum is good. Students are motivated by the many opportunities for work-related learning. They enjoy the increased range of curriculum choice, including the early GCSE options in Year 9 and the opportunities to work in mixed-age groups in some courses at Key Stage 4. The business and enterprise specialism successfully promotes teamwork and thinking skills across all subjects. Good care, guidance and support ensure that students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well-supported. Effective procedures have contributed to above average levels of attendance.

Actions taken by senior leaders to improve the curriculum and the sixth form have been concerted and effective. The school has focused on improving teaching and students' progress and there is a clear trend of improvement, but there are remaining weaknesses, especially in mathematics. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and plans have been effectively implemented to tackle weaknesses. New senior leadership roles are helping to drive improvement. Stronger systems of accountability have engaged

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middle leaders effectively in self-evaluation and action planning. Although improved, the analysis of data on students' progress is not sufficiently rigorous for all groups of students and does not inform senior leaders' priorities sharply enough. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that students meet their targets.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - good practice in assessment is used consistently to plan learning activities that meet students' needs
 - marking is used consistently.
- Ensure that the analysis of data on students' progress:
 - is sharp and timely
 - is at the centre of the school's priorities, actions and self-evaluation.
- About 40% of the 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**

In recent years students entered the school with attainment a little above average and left with average attainment. The school's data show that in 2010 a higher proportion of Year 11 students than previously has made good progress in English and mathematics since Key Stage 2. This year, girls of average ability who underachieved in the past are making satisfactory progress overall, though less so in English and mathematics. Lower-achieving boys in Year 11 have not made sufficient progress but they are making better progress in other years due to the impact of new vocational courses. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Those with a statement of special educational needs and specific support plans make better progress than others identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students attain well in the specialist subjects of business studies and information and communication technology.

The introduction of the 'stage not age' approach to teaching and learning has opened up exciting opportunities for students of different ages who are at the same level to learn together. Most students sustain their concentration well and cooperate effectively. In some lessons they use their imagination well in responding to stimulating resources or tasks. Students enjoy the opportunities to learn independently and in groups to develop their ideas and understanding. On occasion, they have too few opportunities for talk to extend and consolidate learning. In a few cases their progress and level of interest is limited by lack of clarity about what they need to do to succeed in the lesson. Homework is set regularly. In many cases it is shared with students at the beginning of

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the lesson so they understand how they will be able to make use of what they learn. Records of online homework show that only around two thirds of students complete the tasks, which hinders their progress.

Students and their parents and carers feel that students are safe in school. Students are confident that any issues of bullying will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Students' behaviour is satisfactory. In most lessons it is good, but there is occasional low-level disruption. A few students lack self-discipline and there are a few instances of boisterous behaviour around the school site. Students appreciate what it takes to lead a healthy lifestyle and most try and put this into practice. Extra-curricular sports are popular and the uptake of healthy school lunches is high.

Students are actively engaged in business and enterprise activities in the school and wider community. They develop a good understanding of workplace skills through the strong links with a wide range of business organisations. Attendance is above the national average. Persistent absence has reduced and is well below average. Students take on a wide range of responsibilities around the school and the student council is a driving force for improvement. Students are involved in community organisations and they raise significant amounts for charities, both locally and overseas.

Students have positive attitudes to diversity and this is clear in the social and racial harmony in the school. They are confident that everyone is treated fairly. In some areas of school life, such as assemblies, students respond well to opportunities to reflect on spiritual questions but in lessons some opportunities are missed to engage students in thinking about ethical and contemporary issues.

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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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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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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good in most lessons but weaknesses have led to underachievement in the past, particularly in mathematics. Relationships between teachers and students are good and teaching assistants are well briefed to support particular groups. Workplace skills are frequently incorporated into activities and reinforce good learning behaviour. Many teachers are reflective and they use assessment well to match the tasks to the range of needs, which keeps students fully engaged. However, in a minority of lessons, planning is not guided by students' assessed needs, tasks are not sufficiently varied or interesting and there is an overuse of worksheets which slows the pace of learning. Questioning focuses well on the steps in learning. In some cases teachers do not give students enough opportunities to practise new language or express their ideas. Students know what stage they have reached and benefit from the oral feedback teachers consistently give in lessons. However, this is not always reinforced through marking and in a few lessons students lack a written reference point for improving their work.

New curriculum initiatives are capturing students' interests and raising their aspirations. The increased range of options, early GCSE courses and greater range of vocational subjects allow more students to take courses that match their needs and interests and to gain additional qualifications. Collaboration with other providers has significantly broadened the choices offered. The new courses have resulted in improved attendance and motivation, especially by boys. In evaluating the first year of these courses the school has recognised the need for additional courses for lower-ability students. The school has made relevant adaptations to the curriculum to tailor it better for the increased number of students who speak English as an additional language. Enrichment activities and enterprise days are wide-ranging and popular with students.

As a result of good care, guidance and support, rates of attendance, persistent absence and the number of exclusions have all improved. Well-established systems ensure that any concerns are identified promptly and support for individuals is well targeted. There are effective links with parents and carers, and professional agencies. Transition arrangements from primary school are strong and supported by a good range of business and enterprise links. Guidance on post-16 choices and sixth form taster sessions enable students to move on successfully to education, training or employment. The school recognises the need to strengthen the guidance systems to take account of the wider range of ages and options involved in Key Stage 4 choices.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership. The senior leadership team has effectively refocused its priorities on the progress of students, not just their attainment. Over the last year there has been a significant improvement in the rigour with which teaching and learning are monitored. The school now has a clear understanding of what has hampered the improvement in students' progress in the past, including the limited use of data. The systems now in place involve closer dialogue with all staff. This has fostered a common understanding of expectations and an ownership of improvement at departmental level. Although there is greater accountability, this has still to be fully embedded across the school. Middle leaders are motivated and eager to work on improving the school. Some of their roles are underdeveloped and the need for further support and challenge has been recognised. Effective action has been taken to reduce the incidence of inadequate teaching but some weaker practice is still evident. The revised system for lesson planning has strengthened the rigour and consistency of lesson planning, although it is not fully embedded.

Governors are influential in the strategic direction of the school. In the past governors worked hard to challenge and support the school but with limited information. Now they are better informed with much more accurate data. They are enthusiastic about the development of the school but recognise that it is on a journey and understand its areas for development.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Procedures for staff vetting and child protection are extremely rigorous with high-quality training and robust record keeping. The school liaises well with social care professionals and is proactive in holding them to account. Arrangements to keep students safe on visits out of school are good. Aspects of site management and hygiene facilities need further review.

Communication between home and school is good. The website provides good information to parents and carers about aspects of the school's provision and the homework for each child. Parents' and carers' views are canvassed regularly and acted upon. There are good opportunities for parents and carers to engage in discussions about their children, especially those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Partnerships make a good contribution to achievement and well-being. Through the business and enterprise specialism, the school provides good support for local primary schools. Students have good opportunities to work with staff from local businesses.

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Links with a variety of welfare agencies strengthen the range and quality of support for students and their families.

There is a good range of planned activities which promote community cohesion. The school has developed its strategies well in response to its changing population. The school is a racially harmonious community with few incidents of racial bullying. Partnerships with external organisations have been used effectively to improve the achievement of ethnic minority students and to promote understanding between communities. There is improved progress in the areas of equal opportunity the school has targeted, but there are continuing variations in the performance of different groups.

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	2
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 make good progress in the sixth form and outstanding progress in sociology. Increased numbers have applied for and been successful in gaining a university place. A high percentage stay in the sixth form and complete their courses. Students enjoy being in the sixth form, work hard and have high aspirations. Attendance is good. Students are actively involved in running the school council for all year groups. They play a lead role in organising charity events and many are involved in voluntary work in the community. Teaching was not observed during the inspection as students were on study leave. Students interviewed explained convincingly why they thought teaching was good and the school's records provide reliable evidence of good teaching. Students are assessed frequently and actions are taken promptly to promote good progress. The range of courses and the flexibility of options are good as a result of the effective partnership

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with a neighbouring sixth form. The shared access to courses has enabled the sixth form to grow in size and to offer courses more efficiently. Common arrangements for tracking progress and jointly organised parents' evenings contribute to good coordination of provision. The pastoral programme is well organised and provides effective guidance and enrichment for students. The leadership of the sixth form is energetic, enthusiastic and effective in bringing about improvement and in promoting strong working relationships between staff and 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

Most parents and carers said they are happy with the school. They believe their children enjoy school and feel their children are safe. They believe that the school is well led, that teaching is good and that students make enough progress. A small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The inspectors broadly agree with the views expressed by the very large majority of parents and carers. However, inspectors judge that the progress made by students in the past was not as positive as parents and carers believed, due to some weaknesses in teaching and in leadership and management which have now been significantly improved. Inspectors judge that the school has acted effectively to tackle instances of unacceptable behaviour, especially by improving the quality of teaching.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at North Chadderton 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1578 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	28	75	66	6	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	32	70	61	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	37	62	54	8	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	36	58	51	13	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	28	72	63	7	6	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	22	73	64	10	9	4	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	18	73	64	16	14	3	3
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)	40	35	62	54	9	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	29	68	60	10	9	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	29	55	48	20	18	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	17	75	66	11	10	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	32	28	74	65	7	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	37	66	58	5	4	1	1

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.



28 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of North Chadderton School, Oldham, OL9 0BN

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a satisfactory school. These were the things we liked most about your school.

- Year 11 students are on track for better GCSE results in 2010.
- The sixth form is good and increasing numbers of you have succeeded in gaining entry to higher education.
- New curriculum choices and early GCSEs are capturing your interests and raising your aspirations.
- Business and enterprise activities provide great opportunities for you to learn about work and the wider world.
- Those of you with particular needs get good support from staff.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that senior leaders should ensure that:

- you improve your attainment and progress, especially in mathematics
- you meet your targets for making progress
- all teaching uses assessment well to plan activities that meet your needs
- marking is used consistently well in all lessons
- the analysis of your progress is sharp and at the centre of the school's priorities and actions.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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