

Werneth School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106136
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	336623
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Holt
Headteacher	Mrs Pamela Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 42 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students and spoke to some of the school's partners. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's development plan, department evaluations, students' workbooks and 389 parental questionnaires.

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

- the extent of difference in the quality of teaching and learning across subjects
- the level of challenge for the most able students
- the effectiveness of action to address underachievement among students receiving free school meals
- the effectiveness of literacy development in the Key Stage 3 curriculum
- improvements in attendance and behaviour since the last inspection.

Information about the school

The school serves a mixed catchment area. The number of students entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are both higher than the national average. The vast majority of students are White British. The school became a specialist college for visual and performing arts in 2008. Recent awards the school has gained include Artsmark and Sportsmark, and it is the first school in Stockport to receive a Leading Parent Partnership 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

2

Main findings

The school has continued to improve since 2007. The standards achieved by students and the progress they make are both now satisfactory. Attendance has improved and is line with the national average and behaviour is satisfactory. The school has been successful in narrowing gaps in the achievement of different groups of students and in challenging the more able. It has addressed other weaknesses that were identified at the last inspection, such as opportunities to develop work-based skills. The curriculum has improved in a number of ways and is now good; at Key Stage 3 there is an effective emphasis on the development of literacy skills, which is beginning to help students improve their work across the whole curriculum. The school has made significant strides in engaging with parents; those who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were very positive about the changes that have taken place in the school.

There have been improvements in teaching and learning but overall this remains satisfactory because of a lack of consistency across the school. Parental questionnaires indicate a high level of satisfaction with teaching but inspectors judged there is still insufficient emphasis on what is being learned in too many lessons and a small number of lessons where teaching is weak. This is in a minority of subjects but includes mathematics. The quality of care, guidance and support is now a strength of the school. The pastoral system has been completely overhauled and support for students is good. The leadership team has been effective in making several improvements since the last inspection but its members are aware that systems put in place have not yet had sufficient impact on raising standards across all areas of the school. Areas of strength in leadership and management are the results achieved by specialist subjects, arrangements to ensure the safety of students, partnership work, the school's approach to community cohesion and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

Self-evaluation is rigorous and is driving improvement. Although there are still inconsistencies in teaching and learning and in students' achievement in different subjects, both of these have shown some improvement since the last inspection. There have been considerable improvements in attendance, curriculum and care, guidance and support, and feedback from parents. All of these factors contribute to the inspectors' judgement that the school has good capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve further the school should increase the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, by reducing inconsistencies in teaching and learning across different subjects. To do

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this the school should:

- eliminate the weaker teaching found in a minority of subjects, including mathematics
 - increase the proportion of lessons that are good or better by ensuring that in satisfactory lessons, where teachers provide engaging activities that students enjoy, they focus more on what students are actually learning
 - increase the emphasis on assessment of progress in lessons
- 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**

Students enter the school with prior attainment that is slightly below the national average. They make satisfactory progress at the school and reach standards of work that are broadly in line with the national average. This overall picture masks differences in the quality of learning between subjects. Students enjoy the majority of their lessons and particularly like when they are actively involved in tasks. However, in lessons inspectors found too much variability in the extent to which students had a clear understanding of the topic being covered or could recall previous learning. In the school's specialist subjects and a few others, students make good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons.

The school has narrowed the gap between the achievement of different groups since the last inspection. Boys' achievement is broadly in line with that of girls. Students eligible for free school meals are achieving significantly better than they were two years ago, although the school recognises the need to improve this further. Higher-ability students are achieving in line with their targets and the proportion gaining GCSE A* or A grades is close to the national average. In lessons observed and in discussion with students, inspectors found a greater level of challenge for these students than at the last inspection.

Students behave well in many lessons, but not all, and their overall behaviour is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Different groups in the school get on well together and students respect those from other cultures. The majority attend regularly and are punctual to lessons and the proportion of persistent absentees has reduced. Students say they feel safe in the school and this is confirmed by inspectors' observations and parents' responses to the questionnaire. Students adopt healthy lifestyles and participate very well in the life of the school and the wider community. They are acquiring good work-related skills and satisfactory core skills in literacy, information and communication technology, and numeracy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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
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	2

How effective is the provision?

The school is gradually increasing the proportion of lessons that are good or better but there is still too much inconsistency in teaching and learning across the school. Effective staff training means that most lessons are now well planned to motivate students' interest. In many lessons students are well involved in activities and enjoy their work. This is reflected in parents' views on teaching. However, inspectors found that teachers do not always place enough emphasis on what learning has actually taken place. In good lessons, staff are skilled at ensuring that learning has taken place before they move on. They carry out regular and discerning checks on the understanding of all students in the class and use assessment methods effectively both inside and outside the classroom. This is not yet happening consistently across the school. In a small number of lessons inspectors found significant weaknesses.

The curriculum is good because of the extent to which it has developed in recent years to meet the needs of different groups. This is a very inclusive school and the curriculum reflects this in the strategies in place to help develop literacy in Key Stage 3 and the wide range of academic and vocational options available in Key Stage 4. Both these developments are beginning to impact positively on students' achievement. A particularly strong aspect of the school is the level of participation in extra-curricular activities. This is very evident in the specialist areas; in addition all departments are involved in running clubs, visits and trips in this country and abroad, and the number of

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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students involved in activities organised by the library staff is impressive. The personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum is good. Work-related learning has improved significantly since the last inspection and there is satisfactory attention to core skills, though numeracy is not as well developed across the school as literacy. The uptake of modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4 is low.

Care, guidance and support have improved since the last inspection and are now good. There have been substantial changes to the pastoral system. Students and parents were unsure how well they would work when mixed-age form groups were introduced but are now very happy with the system. Inspectors saw how this enables students to help each other and the positive impact on settling new students into the school. Roles and responsibilities of form tutors and other staff are clear regarding the tracking of students' progress and greater emphasis on this is beginning to impact on students' achievement. There are effective systems in place to identify any personal problems students may experience and very good links with appropriate external agencies.

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?

A culture of continuous improvement is now embedded at the school. The leadership team has had a challenging task to drive improvements across every aspect of the school. The improvements in teaching and learning and students' achievements are satisfactory; although there are still inconsistencies between subjects, the overall picture is one of improvement in both these key aspects. In addition, the school has raised the quality of its curriculum and care, guidance and support from satisfactory to good since 2007. In that year some aspects of the school were judged inadequate and these have all been addressed; inspectors now find all aspects of the school's work to be satisfactory or better. Governors are becoming increasingly effective at setting priorities for the school and monitoring progress. Heads of department and other managers are involved in target setting and are becoming more skilled at self-evaluation to determine strengths and areas for improvement. Targets set for students' achievement are challenging.

Strengths in leadership and management include the work with partners to improve the quality of provision at the school. Communication with parents has improved significantly since the last inspection and the majority of parental questionnaires are very positive about the changes that have taken place in the school. There is good

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promotion of equality of opportunity, for example by effective analysis of the performance of different groups of students and the ways in which the school values individuals and involves students in the running of the school. The school's work on community cohesion is evident in the strong contribution made by students to the local community and their links with other communities in this country and abroad.

Safeguarding measures meet requirements and there is a strong emphasis on this across all aspects of the work of the school. There is regular training for staff on safeguarding. Despite the dated nature of the buildings, the school provides a welcoming, well cared for and stimulating learning environment.

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	2
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

Views of parents and carers

A substantial proportion of parents and carers completed the Ofsted questionnaire and the overwhelming majority are very positive about the school. Many parents and carers welcome the changes that have taken place in recent years and feel that their children are well cared for, making sufficient progress and enjoying their school experience. Inspectors agreed with many of these views. They found improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection and good teaching in a reasonable proportion of lessons but too much variability still in learning and progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Werneth 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 inspector received 389 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	34	118	58	12	6	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	46	23	145	71	6	3	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	62	30	124	61	12	6	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	26	127	63	18	9	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	59	30	129	65	2	1	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	21	117	60	29	15	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	17	138	69	21	10	4	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)	72	37	105	53	9	5	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	27	127	64	11	6	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	19	123	61	29	14	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	16	121	63	24	13	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	69	35	117	59	4	2	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	37	115	58	6	3	3	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.



Inspection of Werneth School, Stockport, SK6 3BX

As you know, we recently visited your school and I am writing now to tell you about our findings. Thank you for giving us your views on the school and helping us to find our way around.

Many of you spoke about the positive changes that have taken place in recent years. It was good to see that you enjoy many of your lessons and the extensive range of activities you participate in outside the classroom. We think you make good progress in some lessons and satisfactory progress overall. We could see improvements in the standards of your work since the last inspection. We found the majority of students to be polite and respectful to others, and behaviour in lessons and around school to be satisfactory overall. Most of you attend regularly and we encourage you to try and get the school's overall attendance figure above the national average.

It was good to see the emphasis the school now places on helping you develop literacy and work-related skills and to see that you all had clear targets to help you achieve your individual potential. It was interesting to hear your views on the mixed-age tutorial groups and we agree with you that these are working well. We also agree that the care and support you receive from the school is good.

We have confidence that the school can improve further. To make the school even better we have asked the headteacher to ensure that you make good progress in all lessons. In order to do this we have suggested teachers in some lessons check more on how well you understand the work and can remember what you have already covered. You can help this by thinking about how well you are achieving the learning objectives for lessons, as well as taking part in activities, and ensuring that staff know when you are not clear about a topic.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the future.

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