

# Copley High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106259
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	336646
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Rutherford HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	840
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs A Hill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jim Joyce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons and held meetings with senior and middle leaders, governors, external advisers and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of management documentation, external evaluation reports, students' books and 580 parental questionnaires.

- the progress of groups of students, especially in mathematics
- the impact of the work of the leadership team on improving students' attendance and behaviour
- the effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment to accelerate the progress of all groups of students, both within lessons and over time
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in improving the quality of teaching and students' progress
- the extent to which school leaders have used external support to build their own capacity to raise standards in the future.

## Information about the school

This is a school of below average size with a small but growing number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of students entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has had specialist status in mathematics and computing since September 2005, and has also gained 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

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has improved considerably since the previous inspection and most of this has come about in the last year as a result of a restructured senior leadership team making effective use of external support. The early impact of this work is a significant increase in the percentage of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. Standards are still low but they are now improving strongly. The greatest improvement has been in mathematics. Students' achievement in this subject was persistently weak compared to other subjects until 2008, and it is now at a similar level. There are no significant areas of under-performance and students' progress is satisfactory overall. The school's data show an improving trend in students' progress and younger students are on track to achieve higher standards than those seen at present. Students achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT). Because the recent emphasis has been on raising standards in the specialist subjects of mathematics and ICT, these departments are just beginning to plan a wider contribution to school improvement.

At the heart of the school's improvement is a concerted and systematic approach to improving teaching, particularly the use of assessment. Teaching is now satisfactory overall and the proportion that is good or better has improved during the last year. Most teachers know the level that their students are working at and their targets, but they do not consistently adapt their tasks and questions to accelerate the progress of all groups of students towards their targets. As a result, while higher attaining students are making satisfactory progress, they are not achieving as much as they can. The same is true for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although they make good progress when they work in small support groups.

The curriculum is well organised to meet the range of interests and aspirations of the students. Teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for students to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills in subjects other than English, therefore students' capacity to learn through research and discussion is under-developed and this limits their progress. The staff's care for students is good, particularly those who are vulnerable. Students' attendance is low. The school uses a wide range of strategies for reducing absence and this has led to improvement, for example, a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. The strategies used are not being systematically evaluated to identify where more effort could be focused. The recent hard work to improve students' behaviour, by staff and governors, is contributing to rising standards. Students' behaviour is good and the majority cooperate well with teachers to provide calm, orderly lessons in which everyone can concentrate on learning.

Senior leaders are bringing about improvement rapidly because they ensure that

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external support is focused directly on the school's key priorities for raising standards. This is based on a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. They develop their own skills when working alongside external advisers and can take credit for the improvements in standards that are already in place. They have not yet got a sufficiently clear, continuous record of students' progress across the school; therefore they cannot confidently evaluate the impact of their work on all groups. Nevertheless, the achievements of the leadership team so far demonstrate that they have a satisfactory capacity to improve standards further.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- To improve students' progress and raise standards, the school should:
  - ensure that work in lessons provides the correct level of challenge for all groups of students, especially the higher attainers
  - monitor regularly and continuously the progress of all groups of students throughout the school to check that targets are sufficiently challenging and that the work provided is enabling them to accelerate their progress towards these targets
  - use the improved records of progress to inform a more rigorous evaluation, by senior leaders and governors, of the impact of the school's work
  - provide more opportunities in subjects other than English for students to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills.
- To improve attendance, the school should:
  - evaluate the strategies being used to reduce absence in order to identify and concentrate more on those that are most effective.
- 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 recently starting the school have broadly average levels of attainment and they make satisfactory progress. This is not reflected in the standards currently being reached at the end of Year 11. These are low because students in the past started with below-average levels of attainment and their progress was too slow. However, the school is now improving and standards are rising. For example, two years ago, the percentage of students achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics was below the national floor target of 30%, and it now stands at 39%. School records show that students are on track to continue the rising trend in standards.

Students make good progress when discussing interesting problems or working collaboratively on challenging research tasks. When required to sit and listen to facts, they comply, but their progress is no better than satisfactory. Students with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support that enables them to make the same progress in lessons as other students.

Students feel safe from bullying and they understand how to keep safe outside school or when using computers. They enjoy and contribute to a harmonious climate for learning in which differences are accepted and people help each other when necessary. The Healthy Schools Award is reflected in students' good take-up of the healthy meals on offer and the high rates of participation in exercise. They understand the health risks related to misuse of alcohol and drugs. The views of students influence important aspects of school life, such as approaches to improving behaviour. However, they are not involved to the same extent in decisions about their learning. Students' punctuality has improved: it is now good, which makes an important contribution to their preparation for future training and employment.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers know their subjects well. This represents an improvement in mathematics where, until recently, the school had to resort to non-specialist teachers because of

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<sup>1</sup> 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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staffing difficulties. Assessment information is used well to plan additional support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for those who need a boost to achieve a good grade in GCSE. Teachers are not yet consistently using assessment during lessons to check that all students are making as much progress as they should. In some cases this is because their lesson plans do not include criteria against which to judge progress.

The curriculum provides a good balance of academic and vocational courses. Arrangements for selecting options and good guidance from staff enable students to plan a programme that is well tailored to their personal needs and aspirations. Through good partnerships with local colleges and employers, the school provides courses that engage students who would otherwise be disaffected with education. Information and communication technology is used well to support students' learning across the curriculum, although the wider application of other basic skills is not so well developed. The school provides a good range of well attended extra-curricular activities.

Good guidance and support help students at risk of disengagement to manage their own behaviour and feelings and, therefore, to engage more effectively in learning. When students receive additional academic support, their personal well-being is carefully monitored to ensure social and emotional factors do not provide barriers to progress. The school works in good partnership with a range of external support services to ensure that vulnerable students receive the care and support they need.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders have brought about rapid improvement in teaching by challenging poor performance robustly and by providing professional development that is carefully aligned to teachers' individual needs. In their strong drive for improvement they have gained the support of almost all staff, who understand what needs to be done and feel involved in meeting the challenges. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Senior leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of the school's provision. Their self-evaluation closely matches the judgements of the inspection team. They have recently focused much effort on strengthening teaching and support for underachieving students in Year 11, and they can clearly identify the impact in improved GCSE results. They are not yet sufficiently rigorous in evaluating the impact of their work on students' academic progress across

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the rest of the school.

Governors make a good contribution to planning and monitoring the school's measures for safeguarding and improving behaviour. They have also started to take action to engage the school more in promoting cohesion in the local community given its growing proportion of minority ethnic families. This is building on the effective work already being done to develop cohesion within the internal community of the school.

Staff are strongly committed to providing all students with an equal opportunity to succeed. They have a clear understanding of the different groups within school and they ensure that those who are vulnerable, including wheelchair users, have full access to the curriculum. However, teachers' evaluation of the achievements of different groups of students is not sufficiently regular to check whether anything is preventing them from making as much progress as they can. Arrangements for safeguarding all groups of students are thorough. Any incidents of racist bullying are tackled effectively.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents say that their children enjoy school, stay safe and make enough progress. They acknowledge the information they receive about their children's achievement and about how they can support their children's learning at home. Inspectors agree with these views although they judge that, while students' progress is satisfactory overall, some groups can still do better.

The greatest area of concern expressed by parents, although still by a very small minority, is that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. The



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school acknowledges that there have been difficulties in the past but, as a result of new approaches and staff training, the situation is much better now. Inspectors agree with the school and judge students' behaviour to be good.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Copley 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 580 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 840 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	268	32	492	59	56	7	15	2
The school keeps my child safe	301	36	500	60	24	3	4	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	281	34	476	58	49	6	8	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	255	32	471	58	64	8	12	1
The teaching is good at this school	210	26	542	67	47	6	10	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	197	25	495	62	89	11	10	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	215	26	537	66	56	7	6	1
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)	212	28	499	65	32	4	8	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	208	26	526	65	61	8	11	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	214	26	445	55	119	15	29	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	164	21	498	63	94	12	15	2
The school is led and managed effectively	251	31	493	61	43	5	7	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	293	36	459	57	47	6	5	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 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



Thank you for your cooperation and courtesy when I brought my team to inspect your school this week. The information you provided in discussions and questionnaires helped me considerably to form my judgements.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. As you have noticed, the school has improved considerably in the last two years and is helping you to achieve much better standards than was previously the case. Standards are still low and you will need to work hard with your teachers to raise them further. You have made a significant contribution to the school's rapid progress by improving your behaviour and attitudes to work. I noted how your cooperation with teachers helped you to learn more effectively in many lessons. Many of you could make even better progress if your attendance improved. The school provides you with an increasingly interesting range of subjects to study and staff take good care of you. They make sure that you get any additional support you need to make better progress.

The headteacher and governors are determined that your school will continue to improve and raise standards further. To bring this about, I have agreed with them some areas on which to concentrate. The main priorities will be:

- to ensure that higher attaining students are challenged more and make much better progress
- to have a much clearer system for continuously checking the progress of all groups of students. This will help teachers to make sure that they are providing work that enables all of you to achieve as much as you can
- to provide opportunities for you to develop your reading, writing and speaking skills in all subjects
- to review all the methods being used to improve your attendance and to do more of what is working best.

To sum up, we want you and your teachers to raise your sights on what you can achieve because my judgement is that you can still improve your standards further.

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