

Golborne High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106525
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	336687
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Garry Jones 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	797
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr N Holt
Headteacher	Mr David Lythgoe
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons and held meetings with governors, groups of pupils and senior staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school assessment data, school policies, the development plan, 140 pupil questionnaires and 157 parental questionnaires.

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

- The progress and quality of the learning of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- The standards of behaviour.
- The quality of teaching and assessment, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising standards.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school that serves the community of Golborne to the south of Wigan. It is a specialist college for the visual arts. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above that found nationally, as is the number of pupils with a statement for special educational needs. The school together with a neighbouring high school are part of a phase 1 Building Schools for the Future initiative that includes the closure of the high schools in the area.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and caring school. Since its last inspection there have been significant improvements in achievement, attendance and behaviour. This track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team provide. Through rigorous self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans carefully to address these issues. There is a strong commitment to develop the staff through focused training and by involving them in working parties to address key issues around learning. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

The proportion of pupils leaving school with five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C increased significantly this year. This represents good progress for all pupils within the school, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It reflects the good quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 4. This majority of good teaching and the well planned curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. The school is aware that there remains a proportion of teaching that is satisfactory and is working hard to address this through a rigorous system of monitoring and development work. The enhancement of the curriculum, with strategies to support the most vulnerable at Key Stage 3 through a nurture group and to extend the provision for the most gifted and talented pupils, illustrates the strong commitment to meeting the needs of all. This is also reflected in the development of an extended range of applied and vocational courses including diplomas in Key Stage 4. Indeed, the school successfully took the lead role in the development of a creative and media diploma for the authority. This demonstrates the effectiveness of partnership with other schools, the local college and industries to provide good provision for all. The contribution to community cohesion is good within the school and the immediate community, but wider contribution through pupils engaging with differing racial and religious communities is less well developed.

The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well. Pupils are proud of the school and value the wide ranging opportunities there are to contribute to its day to day running and to its development. This and their contribution to the wider community is an outstanding feature of the school. The opportunities within the curriculum and through the extensive range of extra-curricular activities support the personal development of the pupils well, but the opportunities for spiritual development are less well developed. Pupils are well cared for within the school and the systems for pastoral care and guidance are good.

The specialist school status is being used well to enhance teaching and learning within the school and to establish good opportunities for local schools and the community to experience enhanced provision for the visual arts.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise attainment by ensuring that teaching is of consistently good quality in both key stages by sharing the most effective practice within the school for structuring learning.
- Provide more opportunities to enable pupils to extend their spiritual development.
- Extend the contribution to community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to engage with communities of different racial and religious composition.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Learning is good. In lessons pupils behave well and show they are ready to learn. Indeed, in the best lessons there is real enthusiasm and pupils display a good range of learning skills. They show that they can work together well, take initiative and respond well to challenges. Where the teaching is less effective pupils are more passive learners and complete tasks diligently but with little real enthusiasm.

The proportion of pupils gaining five or more subjects at A* to C rose significantly in 2009 and is above that found nationally in recent years. However, the proportion of pupils who achieve this measure including English and mathematics, although improving rapidly, remains at the national average. Standards overall are average but pupils including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress to achieve the challenging targets that the school sets. Targets for the specialist subjects have been met and standards in art and design are above average.

The positive attitudes of pupils towards school are most clearly seen in the enthusiasm with which they contribute to the development of the school community. The school council and house councils are particularly active in making a contribution to school policies and procedures. Many pupils take on positions of responsibility and show real pride in supporting the smooth running of the school. Pupils are also keen to contribute to the wider community particularly through their involvement in arts projects and through charity fundraising. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the rapidly improved levels of attendance over the last three years. The large majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. There is very little bullying and pupils are confident that incidents are dealt with rigorously. A very small minority of pupils reported through the questionnaire that they did not always feel safe in school, but almost all pupils spoken to felt that they were safe and well cared for. Pupils' social and moral development is good, but their development of spiritual awareness and their knowledge of multi-cultural issues are less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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?

The quality of teaching within the school is good. Some teaching is outstanding, the majority is good, but a proportion remains satisfactory. In all lessons teachers have good relationships with pupils and manage the pupils' behaviour well. The good teaching is characterised by real enthusiasm for the subject and a good range of structured activities that meet the needs of the pupils' well, engaging their interest and ensuring that they make good progress. Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to think and to assess their progress. Where teaching is less effective the planning does not always fully meet the needs of all pupils and the range of teaching and learning strategies is narrower. In some lessons the progress of pupils' learning is not assessed sufficiently to allow the teacher to adjust the learning activity to meet needs fully. The assessment of pupils' written work is good. Pupils are set individual targets which they are well aware of and their progress towards these is monitored closely to identify those pupils who require additional support.

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils and has made good progress in extending the range of examination courses including vocational courses to meet the aspirations of all pupils. Links with local employers and organisations, for example the Ideas Foundation, support pupils in developing skills for their future economic well-being. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that pupils value. Provision for PE and sports is a particular strength of the school. The provision of care and guidance is good and the care and guidance for the most vulnerable pupils is exceptional. Arrangements to support pupils when they enter the school are well established, including a 'buddy' system. Those pupils with particular

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needs are identified quickly and support provided. This includes drawing on specialist staff within the school and from external agencies. There are rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development. Staff know the pupils well and give of their time willingly to meet their needs. The rigorous monitoring of attendance and following up on absence has had a significant impact on raising attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
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?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the improvement of the school and promotes this effectively. He is well supported by a strong senior leadership team that has a good range of skills. There is strong evidence that the leadership of the school is successful in improving rates of pupil progress and attendance. There is a continuing focus on raising attainment by improving teaching. This is supported by a thorough system for monitoring and evaluating teaching which allows development needs to be identified and support provided. The strength of teaching in the specialist subjects has been used effectively to enhance teaching within the school. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and are encouraged to participate in its evaluation through review days and parents evenings. The views of parents are regularly sought through questionnaires and account is taken of their views.

The processes for safeguarding are good overall, but there are elements that are exemplary. There are detailed policies and procedures for child protection and work with other agencies is of high quality. The good progress of all groups reflects the strong commitment to equality of opportunity as does the focus on the eradication of all bullying including homophobic incidents.

There are effective links with other schools, organisations and agencies to support the development of all pupils and the wider community. This illustrates the strength of the school's contribution to community cohesion in the local area. However, the school has yet to engage sufficiently with other communities of different religious and ethnic composition. The governing body is supportive of the school and regularly monitors its progress. Governors do challenge the school and are well aware of their responsibilities including those in relation to safeguarding. However, the governors are not yet sufficiently involved in the formal evaluation process.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school and are happy that the school is effectively led and provides well for the needs of their child and that this results in them making good progress and enjoying school. Few parents have concerns about aspects of the school provision. The inspection team agrees with the views of the vast majority and were unable to substantiate the concerns of the few.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Golborne 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 157 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 797 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	115	37	176	57	14	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	35	187	61	1	0	3	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	109	37	160	54	13	4	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	110	37	158	53	14	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	106	36	169	57	4	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	25	189	65	15	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	70	23	195	65	18	6	2	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)	76	26	195	67	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	88	30	177	60	11	4	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	88	30	162	55	18	6	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	23	158	56	27	10	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	101	35	168	58	4	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	121	41	153	52	11	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



You may remember that I recently inspected your school with a number of colleagues. We would like to thank you for your welcome and your willingness to talk to us about your work and your positive views on the school.

You attend a good school. Pupils have made good progress in their studies when they leave the school. This is because the teaching is of good quality overall, although there is some that is satisfactory. The courses that you study are well organised to meet your needs. This is particularly the case in Years 10 and 11 where there are good opportunities to pursue a range of courses including vocational courses. These prepare you well for your life after school. There are good opportunities for extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports and the arts.

Your attendance and behaviour are good and the large majority of you clearly enjoy school. We were particularly impressed by the ways in which you contribute to the development of the school and to the wider community. This really is outstanding – keep up the good work! The staff know you very well and there are good systems to look after you and to keep you safe. You receive good guidance on your work and on how to deal with any personal problems.

The school is well led and managed. There are clear plans to make the school even better. We have suggested a number of ways in which this can be achieved.

- Sharing the most successful ways of teaching so that all teaching is good.
- Providing more opportunities for your spiritual development.
- Providing more opportunities for you to develop your knowledge of other communities within the country.

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