

# Ecclesfield School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107142
<b>Local Authority</b>	Sheffield
<b>Inspection number</b>	336819
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cathryn Kirby 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>	1750
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Heeley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Nolan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Chapeltown Road Ecclesfield Sheffield S35 9WD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0114 246 1156
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. They observed 42 teachers. In addition, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other school leaders and managers, governors, staff, a group of students, representatives of Sheffield Children's Services and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at a range of documents and scrutinised students' work. Inspectors looked at the questionnaires completed by 604 parents and carers and those completed by staff and students.

- the effectiveness of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment since the last inspection
- provision to support the learning needs of different groups of students, particularly the most-able and those who find learning difficult
- the way in which leaders and managers use the outcomes of the school's quality assurance process to review and evaluate the impact of the school's improvement work.

## Information about the school

Ecclesfield School is much larger than the average secondary school. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Very few students speak English as an additional language or come from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school has specialist status in visual and performing arts. Recently the school has become part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families initiative, 'Gaining Ground', the purpose of which is to improve progress in 'coasting' schools.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4 and the leadership and management of teaching and learning.

Since the October 2006 inspection the school's record of improvement has been mixed. While the school has tackled some areas of weakness, others remain and contribute to students' inadequate achievement. Overall, attainment is significantly below average and the majority of students, particularly the most-able, do not make the progress they should between the ages of 11 and 16. By contrast, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are potentially vulnerable make satisfactory progress as a result of a carefully planned curriculum and learning support which meets their needs well. Established partnership arrangements with other schools and agencies contribute to effective provision for these students, including those who are hearing impaired and those at risk of exclusion.

Too often teaching, although satisfactory, lacks the challenge necessary to allow students to make consistently good gains in their knowledge and understanding. The variability in teachers' use of assessment in lessons and in marking is too wide. Attainment targets lack aspiration. Together these weaknesses contribute to underachievement. Over the last three years students' overall attainment has fallen behind that of their peers in other secondary schools.

Students' personal development is stronger than their academic outcomes, although inspectors found it to be satisfactory, rather than good, as the school's self-evaluation suggests. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say that their children enjoy school and are safe there. The subject specialism of visual and performing arts makes a significant contribution to the many opportunities students have to enrich their learning and supports their strong contribution to the school and local communities. Students' cultural development is good.

The headteacher, senior leaders and other managers have demonstrated the capacity to improve some significant aspects of the school's work. The good developments in the curriculum have extended choice for all. The recent restructure of the pastoral system has improved the quality of provision for students and won the support of staff. However, improvements in the overall quality of teaching have not happened to the extent that could be reasonably expected. Weaknesses in teaching and the use of

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assessment information are an impediment to raising attainment. The governing body has not robustly challenged the school's over-generous self-evaluation of its overall effectiveness.

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

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress by:
  - - increasing the level of challenge in lessons so that students, particularly the most-able, make greater gains in their knowledge and understanding
  - - raising expectations of the quality of teachers' feedback to students in order to achieve consistency of practice within and between departments
  - - ensuring that all teachers are skilled in using strategies to support learning
  - - making better use of the good and better teaching that exists in the school to improve practice more rapidly.
- Ensure that leadership and management have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - - prioritising actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning and agreeing measurable success criteria
  - - increasing the proportion of lessons in which students make good or better progress in learning
  - - reviewing the process of target setting at whole-school level so that it becomes a more effective tool with which to raise the attainment of individuals and groups
  - - increasing the level of challenge from the governing body to ensure that all the school's improvement work has the intended impact.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**4**

Students' attainment across their best eight subjects is significantly below average. Measures of overall progress show that many students underachieve given their broadly average attainment on entry to the school. Too infrequently in lessons do students make the good or better gains needed to accelerate their progress so that all achieve in line with their capabilities.

Those students who find learning difficult or have special educational needs and/or disabilities do better than other groups. They achieve satisfactory and sometimes good outcomes, reflecting the school's strongly inclusive ethos and good work on curriculum development. In 2009 all students left school with at least one qualification. A higher than average proportion of students go on to further education, employment or training. Students' attainment in subjects linked to the visual and performing arts, for example art and drama, are stronger than in most other subjects.

In lessons students behave well although they are sometimes a little passive when there is a lack of challenge or too few opportunities to work collaboratively. During breaks and lunchtimes inspectors saw some instances of unacceptable behaviour which went unchecked by adults. Around half of students completing the questionnaire do not think behaviour is good and a small minority of parents and carers do not think the school

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deals effectively with inappropriate behaviour. Students generally feel safe and are able to identify a caring adult to whom they can turn if necessary. They display good awareness of cyber safety and risks associated with internet use. Some students knowingly opt for a less balanced meal despite the availability of healthy school lunches. A strong feature of students' personal development is their cultural awareness. The subject specialism has an impact here, as do imaginative enrichment experiences which foster tolerance and appreciation of other cultures and beliefs. Participation in enrichment activities is high and helps create a strong sense of community.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
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>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</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>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The school's provision supports students with special educational needs and/or disabilities well. The alternative off-site provision, run in partnership with other agencies, strongly supports the needs of those at risk of exclusion. The record of success in reintegrating them back into school is sound. A specialist provision for students with a hearing impairment is particularly effective and draws students from a wide catchment. A new system for identifying special educational needs and/or disabilities has enabled

<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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managers to target support more effectively. Alternative qualifications in literacy and numeracy for those who find learning difficult have been beneficial in helping them achieve. For others, the choice of pathways is developing well. Sciences and languages, for example, offer a good range of options to meet varied interests and abilities. Opportunities to learn Chinese, play chess and participate in traditional sports or more imaginative forms of exercise, such as cheerleading and street dance, cater to a range of interests. Participation levels are good. The specialism contributes strongly to the imaginative arts curriculum. The school production, in rehearsal at the time of the inspection, involves around 200 students and opens the door to the local community. Others show themselves to be caring and responsible citizens through their good contributions to work in the local community.

The impact of a good curriculum is diminished, particularly for middle and higher-ability students, because insufficient improvement has been made in the quality and consistency of teaching. The use of assessment and target setting is underdeveloped. Consequently, in a significant proportion of lessons tasks are pitched too low, so that some students are not challenged to extend their thinking. Some teachers use challenge very well, but the proportion is not high enough. The helpfulness of feedback to students on how they can improve their work is too variable across subjects. The school provides suitable opportunities for students to reflect on spiritual and moral matters. Events such as a multi-faith week, involving visitors and parents and carers representing a very broad range of backgrounds and beliefs, support students' strong cultural development.

*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	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders have been successful in creating a nurturing environment in which the most potentially vulnerable students feel safe and develop at their own pace. These leaders have empowered other managers to take forward developments which have ensured that provision for these students is improving further. New arrangements have recently clarified roles and responsibilities with regard to pastoral and academic support. This change has been well received and staff are better placed to make a greater difference to students' achievement. Curriculum development is enhanced by established partnerships with other schools and specialist agencies. The school recognises its mono-ethnicity and is striving to ensure that students value

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diversity and are tolerant of others' beliefs.

The headteacher and governors have been less successful in making the connection between a frequent lack of challenge in lessons, the wide variability in the use of assessment to support learning and the pattern of underachievement. The governing body fulfils statutory requirements relating to safeguarding. It demonstrates a strong commitment to its role but has not provided robust challenge where it is most needed. The governing body has accepted too readily the headteacher's view that the school is making satisfactory progress in all areas of provision and outcomes.

The current review of senior roles and responsibilities recognises that the collective skills and energy of the school's leaders and managers could be used more effectively. Recently the focus on collection and analysis of assessment data has increased. The use of assessment and the tracking of progress at both strategic and individual student level is developing, although refinement is required if it is to become a more effective tool in improving the achievement of all groups. When judged against students' inadequate achievement the school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

*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	4
<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>4</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>3</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>3</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>4</b>

**Views of parents and carers**

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire say that their children are happy and safe at school. They say that the school keeps them informed about their children's progress. Most parents and carers consider that teaching is good and their children are making enough progress. Inspectors found this not to be the case because too many students, by the age of 16, fail to achieve the grades of which they are



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capable. The school itself judges teaching to be satisfactory rather than good.

Around one fifth of parents and carers have concerns that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour or take sufficient account of their concerns and suggestions. A similar proportion say that more could be done to help them support their children's learning and that provision could have more impact on helping students develop healthy lifestyles.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ecclesfield 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 604 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1746 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	146	24	397	66	53	9	8	1
The school keeps my child safe	126	21	433	72	34	6	9	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	147	24	405	67	48	8	4	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	167	28	383	63	45	7	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	111	18	429	71	42	7	3	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	15	388	64	106	18	5	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	9	398	66	116	19	11	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)	93	15	412	68	39	6	2	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	113	19	428	71	43	7	5	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	105	17	365	60	91	15	23	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	10	372	62	95	16	20	3
The school is led and managed effectively	131	22	376	62	60	10	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	179	30	386	64	26	4	11	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.**



12 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Ecclesfield School, Sheffield, S35 9WD

Thank you to those of you who gave your time to speak with inspectors. You were polite and helpful. The vast majority of you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe there, although some of you do not think behaviour is as good as it could be.

Inspectors found that the best features of your school included the wide range of courses you get to choose from and the good opportunities you have to take part in a variety of interesting activities which support your development. Those of you with special learning needs make satisfactory progress because your school provides the right courses, support and care to meet your needs.

However, in other areas your school needs to improve. Many of you do not achieve the GCSE results that you are capable of because lessons do not always offer enough challenge. For example, more of you are capable of attaining A\* and A grades at GCSE than has been the case in recent years. We have asked your headteacher and governors to improve the school's examination results by:

- providing more challenge in lessons so that all of you learn more quickly
- checking that actions taken to improve lessons and the hard work of your teachers are focused in the right place to make a difference to your progress
- making sure that you receive high-quality feedback from all subjects to help you improve your work.

You can all help your school in this improvement process by working as hard as you can in all lessons and completing homework and coursework to the best of your ability.

Inspectors will visit your school again to check on its progress.

Yours sincerely

Cathryn Kirby

Her Majesty's Inspector

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