

# Todmorden High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107564
<b>Local Authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	336912
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Barnett 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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	742
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	112
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Hilary Myers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Patrick Ottley-Coconnor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Ewood Lane Todmorden West Yorkshire OL14 7DG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 813558
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@todmordenhigh.calderdale.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Twenty six lessons or parts of lessons were observed and 26 teachers seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies, minutes of meetings, development plans, lesson observation records, staff and student questionnaires and around 100 parental questionnaires

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

- trends in attainment and how well the school is addressing areas of underperformance, such as mathematics and the achievement of boys
- how well behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are being developed
- the development of teaching and learning and how this is supporting students in making progress
- how effectively leadership and management are moving the school forward
- the development of the sixth form

## Information about the school

Todmorden High is a smaller-than-average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The school acquired visual arts specialist status in 2003.

Todmorden High School has gone through a period of significant change in the last three years. The school was named a National Challenge School in May 2008; by April 2009 it was categorised as a Gaining Ground School. Significant staffing reductions and structural changes were made between 2007 and 2009 in response to a large projected budget deficit. The school has achieved a number of awards, particularly in relation to the promotion of health and the environment. These include being designated a National Flagship School by the Food for Life Partnership, Sportsmark and 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

Todmorden High School is a satisfactory school with some strong features, which is now improving strongly. The attainment of students in 2007 was low, but this has improved so that attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2009 was broadly average. The progress made by students has also improved and is now satisfactory. Both attainment and progress are showing a continuation of the upward trend in the current academic year. Mathematics, where attainment and progress were weakest, has shown an improvement in the current academic year; however the school realises further work is needed to embed the changes and ensure consolidation of progress. The progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good.

A large majority of students enjoy school and say it is improving. They feel that the changes made to the building and site have improved their safety and that behaviour has improved. The reduction in the numbers of exclusions and classroom interventions shows that this is the case. However the behaviour of some students in certain lessons and around school is still below the standard expected. The school is aware of this and is working to address the issue by ensuring policies and procedures are applied consistently. The school has worked effectively to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. The promotion of healthy eating and students' contribution to the school and local community are strong features.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. In some subjects teaching is good and better, but there are also weaker subjects, and this is usually where poorer attitudes to learning and behaviour are found. Occasionally, students, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged, and students are not always clear on what they need to do to improve. The use of technology to enhance learning is limited in some lessons. The curriculum is satisfactory and developing. Effective use is made of tutorial time and students appreciate the care and support they receive from their tutors. The sixth form has developed well and is improving in all aspects.

A new headteacher came to the school in January 2007 and, along with restructured senior and middle leadership teams, has coped well with a range of complex issues. The senior leadership team has a clear idea of what needs to be done to continue improvements in the school and a well-shaped vision for the future. However, they overestimated the progress the school had made in some areas in their self-evaluation. A number of strategies have been put in place, which have brought about progress in key aspects but these are not embedded in all areas and the school recognises further work is needed to ensure consistency. There has been a strong focus on partnership working, which has improved and is now good, as are the promotion of equality of opportunity and community cohesion. The specialism is being used to good effect and

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the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

- Increase the proportion of outstanding and good teaching, by:
  - increasing the level of challenge for the most able
  - developing the effective use of new technologies
  - ensuring assessment is used to help students in their next steps for learning.
- Raise achievement and enjoyment in mathematics by ensuring developments within the leadership and management of the department and teaching and learning are firmly embedded.
- Embed policies and procedures, such as those for managing behaviour, so that they are applied consistently across all areas.
- About 40% of 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 make satisfactory progress and there has been an improvement in attainment over the last few years. In 2007 most indicators showed attainment that was below national standards whereas in 2009 indicators showed that the standards reached by students were broadly average. The same pattern of improvement has also been seen in the progress that students make, both through success rates in previous years and observations in lessons. Within lessons students generally show interest in their work and make progress in line with their capabilities.

School data for 2010 show a strong continuation of the improving trend. The achievement of boys and the underperformance in mathematics have been challenged and data show satisfactory progress this year. The school tracking system and the interventions it has triggered have supported developments in this area. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The support they receive, and effective monitoring, encourage them to aim high and to do better than their individual targets.

Students feel safe and say that improvements have been made to the site which have helped in this area, such as the improved fencing. Student behaviour is satisfactory. It is improving, as incidents in lessons and exclusions have reduced markedly. Many students behave well at all times but there are some who do not and this can impact on learning in some lessons. Concerns from students and parents and carers reflect this issue and the school is working on ensuring the consistent implementation of its behaviour policy. There is a strong focus on supporting students in adopting healthy lifestyles and this aspect of provision is good. The school council takes a leading role in helping to improve things and students feel their voice is listened to well. There is increasing work with the local community, much of it linked to the school's specialist status and its high profile in

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the Food for Life campaign. The school is working hard with students to help prepare for their next step at age 16 and there has been a reduction in those not in education, employment or training.

*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>	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	2
<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>2</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 quality of teaching is satisfactory. In lessons which are good or better teachers' high expectations, strong subject knowledge and very effective questioning contribute significantly to students' progress and enjoyment; however, in the majority of lessons limitations of planning and pace prevent students from making rapid progress. The same pattern is seen with assessment of learning. There are subjects where teachers make good use of a range of assessment procedures to meet all students' needs, but this is not found in the majority of areas.

The curriculum is satisfactory and the school has sound plans to develop it further, with a strong focus on personalisation. Partnership working is strong and good use is made of the specialism. Care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory. There are sound systems to support students' personal development and strong partnership

<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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working to ensure the most vulnerable are well supported. These students are making good progress. Form time is used well and pastoral care is strong. Transition arrangements into the school from primary schools are satisfactory and developing, as are those from the main school into the sixth form.

*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>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management have gone through significant change over the last three years and have responded well to the challenges they faced. Soon after the new headteacher took up post in January 2007 it became apparent that, in order to avoid a projected budget deficit, there would need to be a significant reduction in staffing. This has been accomplished, without allowing the focus on students to be lost. In addition to the financial position improving there has been a rise in students' attainment, and progress in other key aspects of provision. There is very effective leadership in a number of areas, but this is not yet found consistently across the school. Strategies implemented by senior leaders are having a positive effect, such as in the reduction in exclusions, but it is too early to see their full impact, and some are not embedded in all areas. Senior leaders have recognised this and 'consistency and quality' are a key focus for the next academic year. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It uses resources efficiently to maintain its present buildings and has well thought out plans for a new building.

Governors work well with the school and have a clear focus on the key issues it faces. They have developed their committee structure and now support and challenge school leaders more effectively than they did at the time of the previous inspection. Engagement with parents and carers is developing. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. There is a systematic approach to the area and students feel safe. However, further work is needed to ensure the maintenance of all records is sufficiently rigorous. Partnership working is a key strength of the school and is used very well to support the development of students. The school and its students work with a wide range of partners and take a leading role on a number of initiatives, such as 'Incredible Edible Todmorden'. Through this work the school has a very good understanding of its local community and very effectively promotes community cohesion. The school is a harmonious community, where students get on well together. There is active promotion of equality of opportunity and action to tackle discrimination. Gaps in achievement

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between different groups are narrowing and the most vulnerable students are given the support they need to overcome barriers to learning so that they achieve well. The school is aware that some further work is needed to ensure the most able fulfil their potential.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Sixth form

The sixth form is developing very well. Its overall effectiveness has improved greatly since the last inspection and it is on a strong upward trend. Students' attainment is now broadly average and they make the progress expected, based on their entry qualifications. Students greatly enjoy their studies and many of them take a leading role in the school, for example mentoring students, charity fund-raising, leading on environmental projects and running the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Teaching is improving with a clear focus on developing independent learning skills. There is an effective system for monitoring students' progress and for putting in interventions when there is an indication of underperformance. Tutors know the students and provide well-targeted support and guidance, helping the students on to the next stage in their career. Transition into the sixth form and the curriculum offer are satisfactory and being developed further. Leaders and managers of the sixth form have put in place well thought out strategies which have led to significant improvements across the provision. They have a clear understanding of all aspects of the sixth form and what they need to do to continue moving it forward



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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## Views of parents and carers

Just over 100 responses were received. Most were satisfied with the majority of areas. The main concerns related to dealing with behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, and communication. Inspectors found that some of these concerns were valid. The school is aware of the need for further developments in these areas and is working on them.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Todmorden 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 720 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	22	71	70	4	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	17	17	78	77	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	15	61	60	17	17	5	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	18	59	58	16	16	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	8	8	57	56	21	21	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	7	58	57	27	27	6	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	9	75	74	9	9	1	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)	12	12	60	59	11	11	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	10	75	74	10	10	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	15	56	55	18	18	5	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	7	63	62	16	16	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	14	14	61	60	8	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	17	66	65	10	10	3	3

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

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

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

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><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.**



18 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Todmorden High School, Todmorden, OL14 7DG

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents and carers; they were most helpful.

We think Todmorden High School is a satisfactory school with some good aspects, and is improving. You are learning well and making progress; your examination and test results, which were low in the past, are getting better. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are some subjects where it is good. You get on well with each other and feel that your tutors support you. The sixth form has improved greatly and those of you in it enjoy working with students in the main school.

The leaders and managers of the school know the school and what needs to be done to improve further. They have made changes, such as those relating to behaviour and safety, that you feel have made school better, and we agree with you. The main areas for the school to focus on now are:

increasing the proportion of outstanding and good teaching by making sure you are all effectively challenged, by developing the use of new technologies and by ensuring you know what to do to improve further

raising achievement and enjoyment in mathematics so that you all do as well as you can in this subject

embedding policies and procedures, such as those for managing behaviour, so that they are applied consistently.

You have a key role to play here by making sure you behave well and work hard at all times. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Heather Barnett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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