

Challney High School for Girls

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109682
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	337354
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Ian Middleton 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	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	908
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Masood Akhtar
Headteacher	Miss Mary Arthur
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed the school's work, spending about two thirds of their time visiting 39 lessons taught by different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, governors and groups of students. A range of documentation was analysed, including planning, policies and monitoring records. The school's analysis of students' progress and attainment was scrutinised, as were a total of 132 questionnaires received from parents, 150 from students and 22 from staff.

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

- the progress made by students in their academic and personal development
- the use of assessment to support students and challenge underachievement
- the relevance of the curriculum in meeting individual needs and interests
- the focus of leaders and managers on moving from a good to an outstanding school.

Information about the school

The school is of average size in relation to secondary schools. The majority of girls are from minority ethnic backgrounds; the largest single group is Pakistani. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very high. A below average proportion of students have special educational needs. The proportion of students claiming free school meals is double the national average reflecting the high level of social deprivation in the area. Specialist status for science was awarded in 2006. The school's other awards include healthy schools. The school is moving to a new building in January 2011.

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

Challney High School for Girls provides a good education for its students. The girls, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress in their academic and personal development. They enjoy their friendships at breaks and respect their teachers in lessons. They value the breadth of curriculum opportunities introduced since the last inspection and participate well in voluntary activities. They benefit from improved assessment approaches, particularly now that more parents visit the school to see how they can add their support. Staff and students are excited about the move to a new building in the next year and the challenge to become an outstanding school.

The many students who learn to use English as an additional language progress quickly in relation to their low attainment when tested at primary school. When they leave the school students' results are close to the national average and in some subjects above. The proportion of higher grades has continuously improved, strengthening the school's resolve to promote higher aspirations. Students' growing confidence to compete and succeed is also reflected in their impressive sporting achievements and participation in local debates and forums. Outstanding contribution to the community is evident in their commitment to charities and the responsibilities and leadership roles they develop and demonstrate with pride in school.

The most effective teaching mirrors students' enthusiasm and embraces their empathy. Progress accelerates when teachers inspire their students by sharing their own experiences or love of learning. Well prepared lessons are the norm. Most teachers use computer technology to stimulate students' interest, ask challenging questions and probe the answers, and organise a logical sequence of activities. However, whilst teaching, including the use of assessment, is generally good the proportion of outstanding teaching observed during the inspection was small. Despite good knowledge of different students' capabilities, opportunities to make choices, respond to varied challenges or develop and apply independence are limited, most noticeably where the range of ability in the class is wide.

The school is a very caring and inclusive community. Staff roles and energies are focused clearly on guiding and supporting students, in partnership with outside agencies. The impact on students' motivation and behaviour, sense of security and health is good. However, despite some exemplary practice, including aspects of safeguarding, the review of policies and procedures by governors is not always regular or systematic enough. The honest self-reflection of teachers and accurate monitoring and evaluation by senior staff, contributes to the consistently good teaching. The school demonstrates good capacity to improve further; there has been continuous improvement in students' achievements, effective action taken to address issues

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identified at the last inspection, and successful use of specialist status to stimulate fresh initiatives. The school is well placed to capitalise on the impetus of new facilities to embed its principles of 'respect, opportunity and achievement' for all.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more outstanding teaching by:
 - diversifying students' learning, including through computer technology
 - working collaboratively, maximising students' empathy and enthusiasm.
- Develop students' and parents' aspirations about wider opportunities by:
 - establishing links with students working in contrasting schools and settings
 - making the possibilities of subjects and relevance of topics more explicit.
- Develop the impact of governors by:
 - reviewing policies, procedures and practice regularly and rigorously
 - promoting the achievements of students and staff in the community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good overall. Students enter the school having attained well below average standards when tested at primary school. They make good progress to reach broadly average standards overall. In 2009 63% of the girls attained 5 A*-C grades, 47% including English and mathematics. Science results were above the national average. A high proportion of students gain an A*-C in religious education and modern foreign languages. The above average proportion of students gaining 5 A*-G grades and the rising trend in higher grades achieved since the last inspection, supports the school's evaluation that all abilities make good progress, including higher ability students and those with special educational needs. The school has met and exceeded its challenging targets, and is tackling underachievement effectively.

Students' learning and progress is underpinned by good care, guidance and support. Regular assessments enable teachers and support staff to establish learning objectives appropriate to students' needs, the impact on progress most evident where students of similar ability work together. Students said they feel safe and well supported in school. Most are enthusiastic learners, answering questions thoughtfully and completing tasks conscientiously. They are less forthcoming about leading or personalising their learning. Their confidence when meeting friends or visitors and maturity when fulfilling responsibilities, indicates that many of the girls have skills and qualities they are yet to apply in lessons. However, their application to community focused work is impressive. Their involvement in activities designed to develop a healthy lifestyle is good. Participation in activities designed to broaden their cultural interests is improving, for example through 'culture club'.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall. Staff are knowledgeable about their subject and their students. Teachers use assessment information regularly to monitor students' progress and the best are able to select from a repertoire of skills to set varied challenges and levels of support, for example in a physical education lesson observed. Computers are used effectively by teachers to stimulate students' curiosity and clarify objectives from the start of lessons. However, there are missed opportunities to diversify students' learning and develop their independence, for example through the use of computers. The enthusiastic and collaborative approach by staff to the personal development curriculum is a good example of teaching taking account of students' feedback. Lesson planning generally gives good attention to sustaining students' interest, often through a series of well structured activities. However, whilst over 90% of students who completed the questionnaire said they enjoy school, several commented that relationships with staff are not always good.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Whilst there remains a tendency for girls to equate their education with learning in school, vocational and enrichment opportunities have widened with a steady increase in take-up. The information and guidance provided is good. It is effective in engaging students and their parents in reviewing progress and setting targets with teachers. New initiatives such as curriculum enrichment days and outreach activities linked to the science specialism, are

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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effective in broadening students' outlook. However, whilst curriculum content in the classroom sometimes adds to students' awareness about the relevance of topics, students' aspirations are not always well informed about how they could apply their skills successfully in the wider world. The range of examination options available, including different languages and opportunities to develop leadership and competitive skills, indicates that the curriculum enables different students to succeed, supporting the school's promotion of higher student aspirations.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

Leadership and management are good overall and effective because the school has built on the strengths identified when last inspected in 2006. It has improved weaknesses and grasped opportunities, for example specialist science status. Staff who are relatively new to their leadership and management roles are introducing new initiatives sensitively and imaginatively. Responsibilities are combining well, illustrating the strategic skills of the headteacher. For example, new pastoral support officers enable other staff to focus more on students' academic progress. The role of governors has been recently strengthened by parental representation. However, the impact of governance is only satisfactory because their intervention is not systematic enough, for example in reviewing policies and procedures regularly. In practice strategies, for example to safeguard students, meet current government requirements.

Senior staff are well-informed about the school and local community; they work effectively to strengthen links with parents and other educational settings. There is still more to do, for example integrating parents and governors into school life. Links with schools in contrasting communities in England are underdeveloped. However, the challenge of moving to a new school building in the next year is being used as an opportunity to refine the school's vision. Whilst resources are managed well and the school provides good value for money, the school is right to target the use of computers as an area to improve. Raising standards and aspirations remain high priorities. Any underachievement, for example because of the previous narrow range of courses or continuity in specialist teaching, is being monitored closely. Underpinning this is an inclusive ethos, emphasised by the students, staff, governors and parents who contributed to the inspection.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school across most aspects of its work. In their comments parents and carers praised the students' achievements and the support of staff. A small proportion of the parents who returned a questionnaire were critical of students' behaviour and thought the quality of teaching was too variable. Inspectors found teaching generally good, including behaviour management.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Challney High School for Girls 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 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 908 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	32	76	59	5	4	6	5
The school keeps my child safe	38	30	77	60	8	6	4	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	39	67	52	7	5	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	30	77	60	8	6	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	30	23	81	63	9	7	7	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	25	81	63	8	6	5	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	27	74	58	11	9	6	5
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)	31	24	75	59	10	8	6	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	16	81	63	16	13	5	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	25	66	52	24	19	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	20	75	59	14	11	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	32	25	74	58	11	9	7	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	71	55	11	9	4	3	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">■ 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.



8 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Challney High School for Girls, Luton, LU4 9TJ

This letter is to thank-you for welcoming the inspection team to your school and to share with you our findings. You might also like to read the full report.

You, your parents and teachers are accurate in thinking that your school provides a good standard of education.

You achieve good results because you progress well at the school, this includes students who find learning difficult.

You enjoy school, value the range of curriculum options and participate well in extra-curricular activities.

You are enthusiastic about learning and express understanding about other people's feelings.

You take responsibility seriously and make an excellent contribution to the community, including the school as a community.

You feel safe, well supported and guided by your teachers who prepare good lessons and interesting opportunities to learn through visits or visitors.

We have reported that improvement in the following areas will help the school move further forward.

Develop more outstanding teaching by making the most of the skills you bring to lessons, and using the full range of resources available, including computers.

Develop your, and your parents' understanding about what might be possible. for you in the future, by making more links between school and the wider world

Develop the roles of governors, by ensuring they are regularly informed and active involved in school, enabling them to promote your achievements publicly.

Yours sincerely

Ian Middleton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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