

# The Charles Read High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120638
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339741
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Brooker 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>	Modern (non-selective)
<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>	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Fox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Trudy Brothwell (Executive headteacher) David Airey (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Bourne Road Corby Glen Grantham
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 44 part lessons and held meetings with nominated staff, governors and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's most recent results and performance data, self-evaluation documents and development plans, as well as 39 parental questionnaire responses and a large number of questionnaires returned by students and school staff.

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

- the impact of the school's strategies to raise standards in English and mathematics to achieve the government floor target for 30% of students achieving five A\* to C grades
- the quality of learning for all groups of students and across all subjects
- the impact of school self-evaluation and the leadership and management of teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

The Charles Read High School is a very small non-selective secondary school in an area of selective education. It serves the village of Corby Glen and the surrounding rural area; the overwhelming majority of students travel to school by bus. Almost all students are white British; there are significantly more boys than girls. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds; the percentage of students eligible for free school meals being broadly average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Student mobility is very high, with almost 40% of Year 11 students having joined the school since the start of Year 7.

In September 2009 the school joined the existing West Grantham Federation of Schools, in a hard federation with St Hugh's Mathematics and Computing College, The Earl of Dysart Primary School and Spitalgate Church of England Primary School. The headteacher took on a new role as principal, with an overarching executive principal from the federation, and governance is under the auspices of the federation governing body.

**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

The school has a deserved reputation as a caring community which places the welfare of students at the top of its priorities. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and the school's strongly inclusive ethos is immediately evident in its friendly and welcoming atmosphere and the students' positive attitudes and good behaviour. The school's modest size and small teaching groups ensure that staff know the students well and can effectively meet their personal development needs and provide additional support for individuals who are at risk of falling behind.

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, but standards have declined since the last inspection and are too low. The school's outstanding results in information and communication technology (ICT) have bolstered GCSE scores for several years, but high attainment and outstanding progress in ICT is exceptional. In most subjects the students make steady rather than rapid progress, and do not make up for their low starting points by the time they leave school aged 16. Development plans identify appropriate priorities for raising standards, but strategies have not focused sharply on strengthening key aspects of classroom teaching and learning. The school is ambitious for its students, and there are excellent examples where individual teachers drive improvement. However, ambition is not sufficiently embedded in classroom practice because the leadership and management of teaching and learning are inadequate. The school has intensified its interventions in English and mathematics this year and can be confident, based on the results of early examination entries, that attainment will increase significantly in 2010.

Despite its size, the school is able to offer students a wide and varied curriculum. It works well in partnership with other local providers to offer a good range of options, and students feel well prepared for the next stage of education. Teaching is broadly satisfactory and sometimes good, but there are too many common weaknesses that limit the students' progress. Lesson planning is often weak and assessment, including marking, is not used consistently to set suitable levels of challenge or to guide improvement. Teachers manage students well, but they miss too many opportunities to enrich the students' learning and do not promote high standards in literacy by modelling writing or by providing structured opportunities to improve students' speaking and writing skills.

Achievement is satisfactory because students make expected progress and there is evidence of rising standards in key subjects. Other outcomes for students are broadly satisfactory and often good. The students' behaviour and their social and moral development are particular strengths, but their spiritual and cultural development is weak. The school offers too few opportunities for cultural enrichment or reflection and

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has no strategy for promoting community cohesion, including the key aspects of culture and faith.

The federation has been a timely and positive development for the school. It has introduced more rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluating performance and more systematic accountability. Although new procedures have not had sufficient time to impact on provision or outcomes, it is clear that the federation has strengthened significantly the school's capacity to steer its future improvement and development.

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

- Raise standards across the school by focusing sharply on the quality of students' learning and strengthening key aspects of teaching, particularly:
  - the focus and detail of lesson planning to ensure that all students are suitably challenged
  - the quality and effectiveness of assessment and marking
  - the way that all teachers model writing and promote literacy skills.
- Strengthen strategic leadership and development planning at all levels by:
  - implementing rigorous systems for monitoring, evaluating provision and outcomes for students
  - replicating the best practice that exists within the school and across the federation.
- Develop the students' understanding of their place in the wider world by:
  - promoting a whole-school understanding of community cohesion
  - extending enrichment opportunities that promote cultural and spiritual development.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

3

Following a significant decline in results in 2007, standards have risen slightly, but remain significantly low. The proportion of students achieving at least five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics increased to 24% in 2009, but was well below the school's target. The recent rise in standards, combined with other indicators of attainment and progress, show that achievement is satisfactory and improving. Like their peers, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The school's contextual value-added scores have been outstandingly high in recent years because of the significant contribution made by exceptional results in ICT. However, in the lessons observed, the students made satisfactory rather than accelerated progress, and this steady progress does not enable them to reach the standards of which many are capable, particularly when their literacy skills are weak.

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Apart from achievement, most other outcomes are good. The students' behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning in lessons; students respond positively to the expectations of staff, enjoy lessons and work very well together. Their good behaviour reflects their positive social and moral attitudes. However, too few opportunities are provided for cultural and spiritual enrichment, and students rarely reflect on their wider attitudes or responsibilities within a multicultural society. The students' spiritual and cultural development is a notable weakness. Many students willingly contribute to the life of the school through the work of the school council, the prefect system and the student mentors. Students feel safe and well cared for, and many respond positively to the guidance on healthy lifestyles by choosing healthy food options. However, many students are reluctant to take physical exercise beyond that provided in the compulsory curriculum.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care and pastoral support. Students are known as individuals and are confident to turn to the school for support and guidance.

<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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Despite being a small school, students have access to an innovative, adaptable and flexible Key Stage 4 curriculum, including a range of vocational options at local colleges and other educational institutions, which meets their needs well.

Teaching has a number of good features, most notably linked with the positive climate for learning in lessons, based on good relationships between adults and students. Teachers plan an interesting range of activities to engage the students in lessons and routinely use interactive whiteboards to structure and support learning. However, there are a number of weaknesses in teaching, some of which are widespread. Lesson planning does not focus sharply on what different students could achieve or how they might learn most effectively. Although teachers have access to assessment information, marking and assessment are generally weak because students are too often unclear what they need to do to improve, or the standards they should reach. Weaknesses in writing often constrain the students' progress, but teaching does too little to systematically address these. Many teachers are unaware of their responsibility for modelling writing, and students are given too few opportunities to rehearse their writing through extended oral responses, or to draft or edit their written work.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Day-to-day management is effective, but the school's strategic leadership has, until very recently, been weak. Senior leaders know what needs to improve, but planned actions for raising standards and improving outcomes have been muddled and have not been securely founded on accurate or systematic school self-evaluation. Monitoring of teaching and the quality of learning is weak, and middle leaders have not been held responsible for the quality of learning and progress in their subject areas. A recent external review of provision, undertaken by the federation, has helpfully identified a focus for development.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities and ensures that students and staff are safe. It is well organised, but governors recognise that, as a new governing body, they need to know the school's day-to-day working rather better in order to hold it to account more effectively. Although the school itself is a cohesive community, it has overlooked the need to be strategic in its promotion of community cohesion. There is consequently no clear plan to meet the needs of the students or the local community. Although the school undertakes some positive activities, there has

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been no evaluation of impact.

Safeguarding procedures are thorough and effective, and the school knows its students well. The school can point to many instances where it has supported individual students to ensure that they are given equal opportunity to succeed, including vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals. Fixed term exclusions are low and there have been no permanent exclusions for seven years.

The school uses its positive relationships with parents and a range of effective partnerships with other providers to promote positive outcomes for students. The decision to join the federation was taken positively and, although the arrangements are only newly in place, the partnerships have already opened up wider opportunities for staff and students. A more robust approach to self-evaluation and line management is one immediate benefit of the new arrangements.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at the school. Most parents are pleased both with the school's provision and the outcomes for students. Many parental responses also made specific mention of the individual care or support that staff have provided for their children, and the way that some staff go out of their way to provide additional help. A few parents do not think that they are kept well enough informed about their child's progress or how they might effectively support their child's learning. Inspectors agree that this is an area that could be strengthened. Three of the 39 responses expressed



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very specific discontent with the way that the school had handled individual incidents. However, inspectors found only isolated cases of dissatisfaction and consider that the school works hard to respond quickly and appropriately when serious concerns are raised.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at The Charles Read 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 260 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	46	16	41	2	5	3	8
The school keeps my child safe	23	59	13	33	3	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	31	21	54	6	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	44	18	46	4	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	49	17	44	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	31	20	51	6	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	38	18	46	3	8	0	0
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)	13	33	18	46	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	41	17	44	3	8	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	44	15	38	1	3	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	20	51	1	3	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	22	56	12	31	1	3	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	59	11	28	3	8	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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

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

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

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



19 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of The Charles Read High School, Corby Glen, NG33 4NT

Thank you for the positive contribution that you made to our recent inspection. We appreciated your friendly welcome and the mature and sensible way that you spoke with us. Your views, and those of your parents, were very helpful in confirming what staff told us about the school, including the good curriculum and the outstanding care and support that it provides. We were particularly impressed with your good attendance and good behaviour; you take a pride in your work and have positive attitudes to learning. We were also pleased that you:

- are happy to take responsibilities within school and make a good contribution to the community
- think that the school cares for you and supports you well
- feel very safe
- are well prepared for the next stage of your education and later life.

In some subjects, particularly ICT, you make exceptional progress and achieve really well. In most other subjects you make steady progress, but this could be a lot better if lessons focus more sharply on what you need to improve, and if marking is more helpful. Standards have been too low in recent years and we have asked the school to improve attainment by strengthening teaching to improve the quality of your learning. In particular, we have asked the school to:

- improve lesson planning to ensure that work is always challenging
- make better use of assessment and marking to guide your improvement
- improve your literacy skills by giving you better opportunities for speaking and structured writing in lessons.

Joining the West Grantham Federation of Schools is an exciting development for your school because it has opened up wider opportunities for you and has enabled the four schools to share expertise that will benefit everyone. We have specifically asked the school to use these links to strengthen teaching and key aspects of leadership, including self-evaluation and monitoring. You can contribute to your own progress and achievement by continuing to work hard and by taking opportunities to develop your wider understanding of the multicultural and multi-faith world that we live in.

We wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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