

Egerton High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131885
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	341241
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Eaton
Headteacher	Mrs Eloise Scroggie
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. Staff were observed teaching and supporting students in three lessons. Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and support staff, students, a member of the governing body, representatives of the local authority and agencies working in partnership with the school. The inspector observed the school's work, looked at safeguarding documentation, students' work and teachers' records. He scrutinised questionnaire returns from students, staff and from five parents. In addition he spoke to four parents who wished to respond by telephone.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of the disruption within the senior management team since the last inspection and the arrangements to secure stability in leadership and management for the future
- the progress students make towards overcoming their emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Information about the school

The school provides for 11- to 16-year-old boys and girls from Trafford and the surrounding area who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. At the time of the inspection almost a quarter of the students were girls although this proportion varies from year to year. All students have a statement of special educational needs and have experienced exclusion from mainstream education. They may join the school at Year 7 or in later years. According to the progress they make, students may be re-integrated into mainstream secondary schools. Nearly all students receive all of their education at the school although a small minority join specific lessons in mainstream secondary schools. Over half of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals. A small minority are in the care of the local authority.

The school has Healthy School, SportsMark status and has achieved Financial Management in Schools status (FMSiS).

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

4

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 special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. At present, students' achievement is inadequate. Students do not reach their potential in their learning or in the success with which they manage their behaviour.

Since its last inspection in 2007, the school has been through a very difficult period of senior staff absence, of financial difficulties and staff redundancies. This led to low staff morale. On occasions, the safety of staff and students could not be guaranteed because unacceptable behaviour on the part of some students was not dealt with effectively. Once it was aware of the seriousness of the situation, the local authority intervened decisively and provided support to the school to reinforce the senior leadership team. Since then, arrangements to generate a calm and purposeful ethos for learning in lessons and around the school are being developed and implemented. However, although it has turned the corner and is now improving, the school is in a fragile state and there remains much to do.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers and support staff are very committed to students' well-being and learning and they have remained loyal to the school through the most difficult of times. They are skilled in teaching students who have a very limited capacity to behave appropriately. They are patient and persistent and successfully avoid confrontations that might make a difficult situation worse. However, at present, too much time is spent in managing behaviour at the expense of learning and, until recently, teachers developed their practice in isolation. There was little that was consistent from class to class. Gradually, with improved leadership and management, the school is developing strategies to motivate students and help them overcome their problems. Reward systems are now applied consistently. There are clear arrangements to ensure students' safety when they cannot cope in lessons, to minimise disruption and to encourage students to return to lessons. Teachers are beginning to develop systems for assessing students' progress.

The school has maintained the good partnership arrangements with external agencies that are a vital support for the students and, despite the difficulties faced by the school, it has a satisfactory relationship with parents and carers. There are curriculum strengths in art and physical education and good support and guidance is provided for school leavers by the Connexions service. However, the full potential of the facilities in the school and its grounds to extend the curriculum is underexploited.

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The root of the school's lack of success lies in its leadership and management arrangements. The senior management team has not provided the school with the vigilant and active management required when dealing with students who exhibit highly challenging behaviour. The governing body is very supportive of the school, but must bear responsibility for allowing the problems to develop to the extent they did. The arrangements to bolster the senior management team are proving successful. However, they depend on senior staff currently temporarily attached to the school, leaving it without the capacity for sustained improvement over the longer term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure the longer-term arrangements for the senior management team and distribute leadership roles amongst staff.
- Improve the students' range and quality of achievement principally through improving the management of their behaviour and the better use of the school's facilities.
- Strengthen governance by increasing the governing body's involvement in school development and in the life of the school.
- Improve the tracking and assessment of students' learning and their progress in managing their own behaviour.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students enter the school with low levels of attainment and, generally, make inadequate progress in their work and in learning how to manage and overcome their behavioural difficulties. All students obtain at least one qualification and a proportion similar to that of many special schools goes on to further education, employment and training. However, apart from a few exceptions, most students do not achieve their potential.

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, and social development, is inadequate. Many of the students have low self-esteem. Poor behaviour by one or more of the students is a feature of nearly all lessons and disrupts learning. The school is not yet in a position to hold regular assemblies for all students and lunchtimes have to be tightly supervised. Attendance has improved since the last inspection but remains well below that of mainstream secondary schools and below that of the local authority's special schools. There have been many short-term exclusions within the past year. Parents and carers expressed their unhappiness that a school intended to help students with such difficulties finds it necessary to send them home as frequently as it does. Students do not in general live healthy lifestyles.

Progress has been made in helping students to feel safe from a position in which they felt unsafe in school. Individual students have developed the confidence to represent the school and students in a number of forums, including within the local authority's youth cabinet.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	4
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are skilled in supporting their students. They have good relationships with them and are committed to their best interests. Teaching assistants are integral to the teaching teams and play a very important part in encouraging students' learning. However, learning is inadequate because lessons are so frequently disrupted by one or more of the students and, until recently, teachers have not had the leadership necessary to coordinate coherent approaches to dealing with disruption and ensuring strategies are consistently applied. Now that the leadership from the senior team has improved, teachers are showing themselves very capable of taking the initiative and developing new approaches to their work. There are promising developments in dealing with disruption within lessons and in assessing students' progress. These developments are at an early stage and will require further refinement and evaluation, but they represent a significant step forward. Staff morale is improving. The school has well-established and good links with a wide range of agencies and partner schools to support the curriculum for students and to provide guidance and support for students and their families. Close working with Connexions is very beneficial for students as they prepare to leave school. The school was instrumental in pioneering multi-agency working within the authority and links with external agencies are a strength of the general support for students. However, in school the extensive possibilities for using the indoor and outdoor facilities to enhance the curriculum 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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largely untapped. There is good provision for basic skills, art and physical education, but science and design and technology are underdeveloped. In-school systems to provide guidance and support for students, particularly by the consistent application of rewards and sanctions, are proving successful, but are yet to be fully evaluated and embedded. The number of fixed-term exclusions has been relatively high, which is particularly inappropriate for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties who may engage in inappropriate behaviour outside of school. However, the number of exclusions has fallen recently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership and management of the school pose particular dilemmas for the senior management team, since the team must be available to support staff and students whenever students are unable to cope, perhaps frequently and often with little warning. The school's failure to provide this support led to the deterioration in behaviour and a fall in the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons have been learned. The senior team has been reinforced, albeit temporarily, and has ensured that senior staff are available for students and staff at all times. As a consequence, the school has arrested the decline in its effectiveness and started to improve. Staff morale and confidence is now much better. As a next step, a permanent senior leadership should be secured for the future, to prevent any possibility of a repeat of what has happened. At present, the school cannot operate without external support.

Despite the deterioration within the school, leadership and management have several strengths: the school is a pioneer in the promotion of multi-agency working for the benefit of students with learning difficulties; partnerships with external agencies are good; relations with parents and carers remain broadly satisfactory; and safeguarding procedures are robust. The school plays a significant role within the community and promotes community cohesion and equal opportunities satisfactorily.

The governing body has a wide range of relevant expertise. It is very supportive of the school. However, too much has been left to the headteacher. The governing body has little first-hand experience of the school when it is in operation and has had insufficient impact on school improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

The views of parents were mixed. Most parents live at a distance from the school. Responses to the questionnaire were by post or telephone. About half of those who responded were positive about the school and how it involves them. They believed it had become much better than it was a few months ago. A majority was concerned that the young people were not making sufficient progress and that unacceptable behaviour was not properly dealt with. Several were unhappy that students were too often sent home from school for inappropriate behaviour, as they believed that this is what the school was there to deal with. The inspector endorses parents' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Egerton 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 inspector received 5 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 30 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	2	29	3	43	2	29	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	3	43	2	29	2	29	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	3	43	4	57	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	29	1	14	4	57	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	2	29	3	43	1	14	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	3	43	3	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	2	29	4	57	0	0	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)	2	29	1	14	2	29	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	2	29	2	29	3	43	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	3	43	0	0	2	29	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	4	57	1	14	1	14	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	3	43	2	29	2	29	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	2	29	2	29	3	43	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

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). 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"> ■ 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Egerton High School, Manchester, M41 7FZ

You may remember my recent visit to your school. The visit was made to see how well you are getting on with your work and in managing your behaviour. One or two of you were kind enough to talk to me in person. I would like to thank those students because I learned a lot from talking to them.

It is clear that the school has been through some difficult times and that students did not always feel safe. I am pleased to report to your parents and carers that you now believe that the school is improving and that you feel safer. It is calm and orderly enough for your teachers and the support staff to begin to ensure that you learn, gain qualifications and help you to manage your behaviour.

However, the school is not as good as it should be and 'special measures' are required to make it better. There are two main areas that need to be better. First, you need to be helped to manage your behaviour better so that you can get on with your work. At the moment, too many lessons are disrupted by behaviour that is unacceptable. As a result, you are not doing as well as you should. Second, the school must have an effective senior management team that you and the staff can count on. The many recent changes to senior staff have unsettled you, and teachers have not been able to call on senior staff to help them when they need it. I have asked the governing body, who, with the local authority, is ultimately responsible for the school, to become more involved in the life of the school. Also, that teachers give priority to assessing your progress, and involving you in this, and in setting targets for you to meet. An inspector will make regular visits to check on the progress your school is making and publish a report of the findings on the Ofsted website.

When I was in your school, I was very impressed with how much staff care about your well-being and development. I would like to think that the school will become a place where each one of you overcomes the difficulties you have and goes on to achieve the best you are capable of. The staff cannot do this on their own; they need your full cooperation. That much is down to you.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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