

# Ormskirk School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132834
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	341354
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Garry Jones 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>	Voluntary controlled
<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>	1403
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	235
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr G Slawinski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Doyle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	0 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Wigan Road Ormskirk Lancashire L39 2AT
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 47 lessons observing 47 teachers during the large majority of inspection time. In addition, the team held meetings with governors, staff, groups of students and local authority officers. They observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding documents, policies, departmental evaluations, assessment information and 169 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether the achievement of students is improving
- if the quality of teaching is sufficient to allow students to make good progress
- whether the curriculum meets the needs of all students
- whether leadership and management at all levels are making sufficient progress in improving teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

Ormskirk School is of larger than average size. Students are predominantly of White British backgrounds and the proportion from other ethnic groups is well below that found nationally. The percentage of students eligible for a free school meal is less than half that found nationally. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below the national average, but the number with a statement of special educational need is above that found nationally. This in part reflects the fact that the school is resourced for supporting students with a hearing impairment. The school is a specialist college for the visual and performing arts.

**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

This is a satisfactory school. Students' attainment is broadly average and they make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. This reflects teaching that is satisfactory overall, although there is some good teaching. Where teaching is satisfactory the planned activities fail to fully engage students' interest and their approach to learning is methodical rather than lively. This is partly because the planning does not build sufficiently on students' previous learning to challenge them to make good progress. The assessment of students' work is regular, although in some cases work is not marked with sufficient frequency to support good learning. There are some good examples of staff providing students with clear advice on how to improve their work through detailed comments in marking, but this is not sufficiently consistent. The curriculum is satisfactory, but the specialist arts status is being used to enrich the curriculum internally and within neighbouring schools.

Care and guidance for students and safeguarding of their health, safety and well-being are effective. The large majority of students and their parents believe that the school keeps them safe. Most students say that they enjoy school and attendance is above average. The students have largely positive views on the school and are keen to make a contribution to the development of the school and the wider community. A minority of parents are concerned that the school does not keep them sufficiently informed of how well their children are doing and does not involve them sufficiently in the education of their children. The school recognises this as an area for development and inspectors agree. Behaviour was also raised as a concern by a minority of parents and students. Inspectors judge behaviour to be satisfactory overall and the poor behaviour of a small number of students to be managed effectively.

The process of self-evaluation by the senior leadership team is accurate and provides a clear view of the strengths and areas for development. The role of middle leaders in evaluating the provision and the outcomes in their areas is developing through a programme of training. However, it is not yet operating with sufficient rigour in all areas. The focus on improvement by the senior leadership team is shared by the governing body, which is effective in holding the school to account and challenging it to improve. There are plans for further improvement and these are beginning to bring about improvement in the quality of teaching and achievement. The impact of the plans is not yet consistently evident in all departments and as a result, the capacity of the school to improve is judged to be satisfactory.

The sixth form is good. The outcomes for students are good reflecting effective provision for teaching and for the support of the students. It is well led and managed.

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

- Raise achievement, by:
  - increasing the proportion of teaching that is good by consistently using assessment data effectively to make all lessons sufficiently challenging to enable students to make good progress
  - improving the consistency with which students are given clear advice in marking on how to reach their targets.
- Develop the role of middle managers in monitoring and evaluating provision in their area in order to plan for improvement.
- Improve communication with parents to ensure that they are fully involved in the education of their children.
- 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**

The extent to which students achieve and enjoy their learning is satisfactory. In lessons, the large majority of students have good relationships with their teachers and with each other. They behave well, although there are incidents of poor behaviour when students are not engaged sufficiently by the planned activities. In the most effective lessons, students engage with the tasks and show interest and indeed enthusiasm for the work. They demonstrate that they can work independently and in groups and make the most progress when the planned activities provide opportunities for active involvement in the work, for example, in practical science. In too many lessons, students remain passive and are not actively engaged with the planned activities. In these lessons, the students show little real enthusiasm for learning and the pace of learning slows. The standards that students attain are average, but there are signs of improvement, particularly in the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\*-C at GCSE that include English and mathematics. This figure has risen steadily for three years and is now significantly above average. Students make satisfactory progress given their starting points, which represents an improvement over recent years. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve equally as well as other students.

The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of students is satisfactory, but awareness of other cultures is not as well developed as other aspects. Attendance is above average and the attendance of those students who are persistent absentees is improving. The large majority of students enjoy school and report that they feel safe and that there is someone to talk to if they face difficulties. Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and the take up of school meals is high, as is the proportion of students who take part in physical activities. Students are keen to make a contribution to the school by taking on positions of responsibility within the school and to the wider community, for example, by charity fund raising.

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*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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</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>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there is a proportion of good teaching and a very small proportion that is inadequate. Too much of the teaching is satisfactory to allow students to make good progress. Activities are planned to meet the needs of students of differing abilities, but these do not always provide appropriate levels of challenge to engage students' interest fully. In some lessons, the learning objectives are not sufficiently precise to make clear to students the focus of the learning. In other lessons, the teacher talks for too long and students are not given sufficient time to engage with the work. Information and communication technology is not used extensively to support learning. The effect of these weaknesses is that students work methodically rather than at a brisk pace, with the result that they make satisfactory rather than good progress. In the better lessons, a good range of well planned activities challenge students to make good progress. Teachers have high expectations and use questions well to assess students' understanding and to extend their learning. In these lessons, assessment is used well to support students in achieving their targets. However, the use of marking to provide clear advice to students on how to improve their work is inconsistent.

<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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The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students in both key stages. The curriculum has been extended for students in Year 7 with a 'learning to learn' course to enhance their study skills. The number of pathways at Key Stage 4 has been increased to fully meet the needs of all abilities. These include the provision of BTEC courses for those students for whom traditional GCSE courses were proving inappropriate. There is also an apprenticeship programme for a small number of students and an alternative curriculum for a small group of lower ability students at risk of disengagement. In addition, there is a range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum. Specialist arts status has been used to provide intensive learning days that link together subjects.

Care, guidance and support are a strength of the school. There are effective procedures for managing the transition of students from their primary school into Year 7 and in managing the move into Key Stage 4 and beyond. The staff know the students well and students report that they are well supported. The role of the heads of year has been extended recently into that of learning managers who monitor academic progress, as well as students' personal development. There is effective support for the most vulnerable students through the achievement centre and through effective liaison with external agencies. There is good provision for encouraging attendance and students with poor attendance are well supported.

*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>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and his senior colleagues have a clear vision for the development of the school and have identified as a priority the need to raise achievement further through improving the quality of teaching. The staff survey suggests that they have yet to convince all staff of the need for the sustained improvement and the appropriateness of the strategies adopted. A newly established senior team is in place and there are clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The process of self- evaluation is robust and there are clear plans for improvement. While the plans are beginning to raise standards and to improve teaching, there remains much to be done and the full effect of initiatives is yet to be seen.

The governors have a good overview of the areas for development and are not afraid to challenge the school to improve and to take difficult decisions. They have a clear focus on ensuring the well-being of the students and the procedures for safeguarding students

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are good. There is also a clear focus on ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted and that groups of students are supported to achieve equally well. However, monitoring the participation by groups in all aspects of school life is not fully developed. There is a commitment to community cohesion within the school and in establishing links to the local community, particularly through the arts specialism. Links to schools in other countries and aspects of the curriculum address issues of cohesion on a broader scale. However, work to broaden students' direct experience of other cultures within Britain is less well developed. The school's engagement with parents is satisfactory and there are strategies in place to promote partnerships and to engage parents. However, a small minority of parents feel that there is room to increase the amount of information they receive on their children's progress and how they can contribute to their education. The school correctly recognises that this is an area for further development.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Sixth form**

The sixth form provision is good; most students make good progress and the large majority progress to higher education. Teaching is good and students clearly enjoy their work. They effectively develop skills of independent and collaborative study. They have clear targets for improvement and progress is regularly tracked. Students' personal development is effective and they are confident and mature young people well prepared for their future lives. Students show respect to each other and are keen to take on positions of responsibility within the school by mentoring and supporting younger students. The range of courses provided is appropriate and meets the needs of students well. Effective guidance ensures that students make an appropriate choice of course.



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Leadership and management are effective. The leadership team evaluates outcomes and provision well and there is effective planning for improvement.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents have positive views of the education that the school provides for their children. However a small minority had a concern that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that behaviour overall is satisfactory and that incidents of misbehaviour in lessons are dealt with appropriately. In addition, a very small minority raised a number of other concerns. Three related concerns were that the school did not keep them sufficiently well informed of their children's progress, did not take account of their concerns and did not help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors agree that the school could do more to involve parents in the education of their children and the school accepts this criticism. A further concern was that the school was not well led and managed. Inspectors understand the concern of these parents given that there have been some changes to the leadership team over recent months. However, inspectors judge that there are effective leadership systems and that the governors are closely monitoring the situation.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ormskirk 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 166 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1403 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	31	101	61	8	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	52	31	106	64	7	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	45	27	92	55	26	16	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	31	94	57	14	8	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	20	109	66	15	9	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	17	98	59	29	17	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	17	104	63	25	15	3	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	38	23	100	60	11	7	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	25	103	62	16	10	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	19	91	55	24	14	12	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	16	96	58	28	17	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	22	95	57	23	14	7	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	29	93	56	17	10	3	2

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

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

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

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

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.**



15 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Ormskirk School, Ormskirk, L39 2AT

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when my colleagues and I recently inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views about the school. You attend a school that provides you with a satisfactory education.

You attain standards that are broadly average and make satisfactory progress. The proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\*-C at GCSE including English and mathematics is rising steadily and is above average. You make satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory. However, there is also good teaching and in those lessons we saw you enjoying learning and making good progress. The range of subjects and courses offered within the school is satisfactory. In recent years, the range of options you can follow in Years 10 and 11 has improved.

The staff know you well and provide good care and guidance. You attend school regularly and the large majority of you behave well. A small number of students misbehave and they are dealt with effectively. The headteacher and his senior colleagues know the school well and they are determined that the school will continue to improve. We have asked them to increase the number of good lessons within the school by asking teachers to plan challenging lessons by building on their knowledge of what you can already do. We have also asked the teachers to give you clear advice on how to reach your targets when they mark your work. We are asking heads of department, heads of faculties and learning managers to review the work of their departments more carefully and to plan for improvement. Finally we have asked the school to keep your parents well informed of your progress and to help them to find ways to support your learning.

You can help the school by telling your teachers the types of lessons that help you to learn well. It is also important that those of you who do not behave well apply yourselves to your lessons.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Garry Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector

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