

# Castle Hill High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106172
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockport
<b>Inspection number</b>	355899
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marian Thomas

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>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bevon Blackwood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Law
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lapwing Lane Brinnington Stockport SK5 8LF
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 494 6439
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 406 6592
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 14 lessons and observed 13 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, teaching staff, and curriculum coordinators. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning for lessons, school leaders' development plans and samples of pupils' work. They also took into account the views of 78 parents and carers who returned questionnaires to the inspection team.

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

- Pupils' work in English, mathematics and science.
- How well the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all learners.
- The progress of different groups of pupils.
- How well governors support the school.

## Information about the school

Castle Hill High School is an average-sized secondary special school. It provides for the needs of pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, all of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Most have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Significant numbers have either autistic spectrum disorders or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Overall, pupils' attainment is severely restricted by their complex learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds and there are currently more boys than girls. A small minority of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school has gained Healthy School status, Investors in People, Quality Mark and an International School Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Castle Hill High School is a good school. It has many strengths. The care, guidance and support provided for all pupils are outstanding. The success with which pupils' complex behavioural and learning needs are met enables them to make good progress academically and excellent progress in many aspects of their personal development. Parents and carers are exceptionally appreciative of the work of school staff in supporting their children. One commented: 'our child has made progress way beyond our expectations at this brilliant school'.

The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure the quality of provision necessary for them to do so. The self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and rigorous; findings are acted on to good effect. The school's key strength is its ability to recognise and support the diverse needs of all pupils. This ensures barriers to learning are minimised and all groups make equal progress. Since the last inspection, aspects of the school's performance have improved significantly and senior leaders are now kept well informed about pupils' progress. This demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Pupils grow in confidence as they move through school. They thoroughly enjoy school. They are exceptionally clear about how to stay healthy. Behaviour is good both within and outside the classroom. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure at school; they are very keen to know how to look after themselves and learn how to adopt safe practices. Excellent links with outside agencies have been developed which support pupils' learning and development significantly. This, coupled with a very well developed work experience programme, helps to ensure pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education or training. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the local community and are highly appreciative of the needs of others.

Teaching is good in the majority of classrooms and is based on clear assessment of pupils' learning needs. Overall progress is good. However, in a small number of lessons the pace is too slow and planning does not accurately reflect the needs of all learners. On these occasions, learning slows down. A detailed assessment system is securely in place. This ensures that monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress towards their targets is effective in most subjects. In mathematics, this is less well developed. Teaching assistants provide a high level of support in all lessons. The curriculum is excellent and meets the needs of all learners exceptionally well.

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching, by:

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- – increasing the pace of learning in some lessons, especially in mathematics, to make the best use of the time available.
- – building on successful practice in monitoring lessons and identifying specific targets for improvement.
- Improve pupils' achievement in mathematics so that it is equal to English and science, by:
  - – monitoring planning effectively to ensure that it consistently reflects the needs of all pupils in all lessons.
  - – refining monitoring and target setting within some mathematics lessons.

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

Pupils who join the school have a diverse range of learning needs and a low attainment overall. They settle quickly and respond positively to their individual learning programmes. These enable pupils to work consistently and achieve well in most areas of the curriculum. This was demonstrated particularly well in an outstanding science lesson, in which the class was testing the properties of sulphur and iron. Pupils with a wide range of abilities participated enthusiastically, recording their findings in ways appropriate to their level of understanding. As a result, all made excellent progress. Given the nature of these pupils' learning needs, this was impressive. However, learning slows when planned activities do not reflect pupils' needs closely enough.

All pupils leave with qualifications and accreditations. Last year's school leavers successfully passed examinations in art, three-dimensional studies, English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. All groups of pupils, including those on the autistic spectrum and those who are looked after by the local authority, make equally good progress.

Pupils feel exceptionally safe because they know that staff are supportive and help them at all times. They are increasingly confident in looking after themselves. Most clearly enjoy school and attend regularly. As one pupil commented: 'It's really great here, they make me feel good about myself'. Pupils recognise the importance of eating healthy meals and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. Many pupils enjoy the wide-ranging sporting opportunities offered and appreciate the part this plays in a healthy lifestyle. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community both in and outside school by listening to and appreciating the needs of others. For example, pupils are frequently involved in community projects, such as collecting litter and hosting events for the elderly. Pupils' excellent overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in the way in which they react to each other and take care of the environment. This is evident in the work undertaken by the school council to improve the school environment.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	*
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Most teachers use assessment information effectively to set achievable targets for pupils. Lesson planning is conscientious in most classrooms and attention is given to ensuring that work is modified to meet the different needs of pupils within the class. However, in a small minority of classrooms, the pace of the lesson is too slow and this is reflected in lesson plans. For example, too much time is allowed for particular activities. This reduces the effectiveness of learning for some pupils and slows their progress. This happens most frequently in mathematics. In most lessons, support staff are very well deployed and work closely and effectively with teachers to support the needs of all learners.

The excellent curriculum is well organised and is imaginatively enhanced by many visits and activities away from the classroom. Residential visits to a variety of locations help to develop pupils' independence. For example, a recent visit to an outdoor pursuits centre enabled pupils to put into practice new skills that they had learned. This was described by one pupil as: 'A brilliant place, where I learnt so many new things'. The range of academic accreditation offered to pupils is very good, as are the quality of work experience and college placements.

As a result of outstanding care, guidance and support pupils feel there is always

<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.

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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someone who will listen and help. A careful and thorough assessment is undertaken when pupils arrive at the school, which is then used to target support effectively. Vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well supported and this is helped by the excellent links with many outside agencies, including the school nurse and the education welfare service. Transition arrangements are securely in place and are well supported by partnerships with Connexions advisors.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The insightful and visionary leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders is moving the school forward exceptionally well and ensuring good outcomes for pupils. With many aspects of pupils' personal development, outcomes are impressive. This vision and determination, coupled with excellent partnerships forged with outside agencies, is driving improvement further. The leadership and management of teaching and learning is an identified focus for the school. Work on this has already resulted in a marked improvement in the quality of most lessons. Leaders know that the close monitoring of teaching and support for improvement is the key to ensuring that all lessons are consistently of good or outstanding quality.

The governing body has implemented strong procedures to ensure the health and well-being of all pupils. The governors offer good support to the school and challenge to senior leaders. Policies and procedures ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met and that practice is of a good standard. The strength and quality of these procedures mean that safeguarding issues are dealt with effectively by senior leaders. Leaders and managers have ensured that the school is a highly inclusive community. Systems to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle discrimination within school are excellent. The school works hard and successfully to eliminate any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils.

Leaders have built successful links which benefit pupils and the local community. Some links with the global community are well established through the school's international link school in Sri Lanka. The school makes great efforts to engage all parents and carers and as a result, they are kept very well informed about their child's successes. Parent education programmes and diary links with home are in place and, as a result, parents and carers are highly appreciative of the ongoing work of the school. The school ensures good outcomes for pupils, many of whom have significant needs. It does this on a well

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controlled budget and provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Seventy-eight responses were received by the inspection team from parents and carers. This represented just over 50% of the school population and was a good response rate. Nearly all of the questionnaires were wholly positive and supported the work of the school. Many contained very positive comments on how well they felt the school supported and nurtured their children. These views reflected the findings of the inspection team.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Castle Hill 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	65	23	29	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	74	19	24	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	47	60	29	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	58	29	37	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	49	63	27	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	60	25	32	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	55	30	38	2	3	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)	45	58	29	37	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	60	26	33	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	62	23	29	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	60	27	35	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	64	23	29	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	69	22	28	0	0	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



15 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Castle Hill High School, Stockport, SK5 8LF

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. It was lovely to meet you all and to hear how much you enjoy coming to school. We send a special 'thank you' to those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. We agree with those of you that told us that you think your school is good.

These are the things we liked the most.

- You give all visitors a polite and friendly welcome.
- The excellent way in which staff care for you helps you to make future choices.
- You all work hard and achieve good qualifications.
- You help each other and the local community.

In order to make your school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- make sure that you all work equally hard and a bit faster in some lessons so you achieve even higher targets
- make sure that all your lessons are the best quality possible.

Thank you once again for such a lovely welcome, and a special thanks to the boys in the turnaround room who made such lovely scones and flapjacks.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marian Thomas

Lead inspector

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