

Calday Grange Grammar School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105112
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	364627
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Marguerite Murphy HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1457
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	560
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Twemlow
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Hall
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2006
School address	Grammar School Lane West Kirby, Wirral Merseyside CH48 8GG
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Forty-three lessons, each taught by a different teacher, were observed and a number of other teachers and support staff were seen at work or in meetings with inspectors. Meetings were also held with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority representative, groups of students and a group of governors. Telephone discussions were held with the School Improvement Partner and the Chair of the Calday Grange Trust. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation including student attainment and progress tracking, key policies and development plans, evaluation and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Questionnaires completed by 198 parents and carers were scrutinised, in addition to 224 from students in Key Stages 3 and 4 and 86 from members of staff. Due to the high volume of parents expressing a wish to speak to the lead inspector, a meeting was offered to those parents on the evening of the first day of the inspection, and 53 attended.

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

- The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and helping to shape the direction of the school.
- The quality and accuracy of the school's evaluation of its performance, including how any variations between subject departments and key stages are identified and remedied.
- The impact of the school's partnerships in promoting students' learning and well-being.
- The quality of the school's communication and relationships with parents and carers.

Information about the school

Calday Grange is a larger-than-average selective grammar school for boys. The large sixth form is mixed, with girls representing approximately one quarter of the total number of post-16 students. Most students are from White British backgrounds and almost all speak English as their first language. Few students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Very few students have special educational needs and/or disabilities and none of these has a statement of special educational needs. The school has both Technology College and Languages College status and holds a Healthy Schools Award. Calday Grange is designated as a 'Confucius Classroom', one of five schools supporting the Chinese government in developing Mandarin Chinese in the United Kingdom. It is also a designated IB (International Baccalaureate) World School.

Calday Grange became a Trust School in January 2009 and its partners are Unilever, the University of Liverpool and Maestro Services. Although the Department for Education confirmed in August 2010 that the Trust had been properly constituted, there remain a number of vacancies on the governing body. Under the terms of the Trust arrangements, these vacancies have to be filled by Trust governors and this aspect has yet to be resolved. During the absence of the substantive headteacher, the school is being led by the acting headteacher, supported by an executive headteacher for two days each week.

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

3

Main findings

Calday Grange is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features. Most students thoroughly enjoy their learning, and attendance and punctuality are excellent. They make good progress and reach high standards of attainment. These factors contribute to students' highly effective application of basic skills across all areas of school life and their aspirational views of what they can achieve in their future lives and careers. Students demonstrate excellent social, moral and cultural awareness which contributes to the school's outstanding promotion of community cohesion. Much work is done at local, national and international levels, for example, the very successful whole-school charity events appeal, LeJog, which is raising a significant amount of money for Alder Hey Children's Hospital. Despite some turbulence surrounding events of the past year, relationships between adults and students are very positive. Teaching is good and students are cared for, guided and supported very well. The school is highly committed to partnership working and its specialisms contribute excellently to a wide range of outreach programmes. Calday's partner schools greatly appreciate the Confucius Classroom work in developing Mandarin Chinese. Calday provides evening language classes and family learning experiences. Links with the local City Learning College provide Calday students with access to specialist technology equipment.

The school's evaluation of its performance, although over-generous in some aspects, includes accurate analysis of data on students' progress in all subjects and year groups. Leaders and managers at all levels, some of whom are relatively new to their positions of responsibility, are working effectively to maintain the school's vision and high standards during a difficult period involving staffing issues at a senior level. A recent emphasis on developing a more distributed leadership structure is enabling more staff to make valued contributions to the school's plans for development and improvement. A minority of staff and a high proportion of parents who responded to inspection questionnaires expressed reservations about the unresolved difficulties around the school's governance and Trust status. It is felt by some that this is having a negative impact on the school's current leadership arrangements and its capacity to continue improving. However, the inspection found that students are continuing to achieve highly and the governing body meets statutory requirements. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good. This is because, the school has made satisfactory progress in most areas since the last inspection and issues around the substantive leadership of the school are not yet resolved. However, standards remain high and all aspects of its provision are good. The governing body recognises that more effective communication with parents is desirable and is committed to working on ways to improve this aspect of their work. The school's engagement with parents and carers, while very positive in many respects, is satisfactory overall. Communication has not always been effective: parents have not always felt that leaders provide timely information on important decisions about whole-school matters, for

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example, curriculum changes. Recently introduced procedures are beginning to show improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the role of the governing body in helping to shape the direction of the school and in restoring the confidence of a significant minority of parents and staff by:
 - – systematically consulting and gathering the views of users and stakeholders in order that these can be taken into account when planning for the future
 - – communicating more effectively with parents and carers, ensuring a quick response to their views and concerns whenever possible
 - – building on the governing body's productive working relationship with the local authority to support the school's endeavours to resolve remaining issues around the school's Trust status.
- Establish a well understood, effective and robust communication system between school and parents and carers by:
 - – identifying areas for more effective communication development through an audit of parents' and carers' views and any other available means, including better use of information and communication technology (ICT)
 - – making sure there is a full range of options available for proactive feedback from parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students are confident and articulate. They are proud of their school and make an outstanding contribution to its community in a number of ways, for example, as prefects, peer mentors, members of the school council and through representation on the Wirral Youth Parliament. Students have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Most parents and carers, staff and students agree that the school keeps students safe. Questionnaire responses indicated that almost 40% of the sample of students whose questionnaires were analysed disagree that the school helps them to be healthy, but recognise that healthy food choices are available and they enjoy a good range of physical activities during and after school hours. A minority of students disagree that behaviour is good, although inspectors found that attitudes to learning and behaviour in almost all lessons they observed was good or better. Outstanding behaviour was seen in almost all Key Stage 4 classes.

Students enter Year 7 with significantly above-average attainment, due to the selective nature of the school's entry criteria. Results in GCSE examinations in 2010 were significantly above the national average, maintaining the school's consistently high performance over time. Over 98% of students gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. The overall proportion of students gaining A* and A grades was also high, although the school is aware of some variation between subjects and is taking action to remedy this. For example, the achievement of A* to A grades in biology and chemistry improved between 2009 and 2010, to above average.

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Students are eager to succeed. They show a keen interest in their subjects and have a thirst for learning that contributes to the good progress they make in lessons and over time. The very small numbers of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress due to the effective personalised programmes and support provided both in and beyond lesson times. Students enjoy being challenged and work at a good pace in response to high expectations. In a Key Stage 4 mathematics lesson students made excellent progress in explaining methods used in algebraic division because the problems they were set were challenging and kept them motivated. On the few occasions when students are less engaged in their learning, they are more passive and do not respond in depth to teachers' questioning. A third of the students who completed questionnaires feel that teachers are insufficiently interested in their views. Students are not always provided with sufficient opportunities for discussion or problem-solving activities to increase their participation and enjoyment. For example, some students in a Key Stage 3 lesson were discouraged from talking about their work at a time when this could have increased their level of engagement and consolidated their learning. Conversely, another Key Stage 3 lesson was enlivened by effective group work and collaboration so that students made good progress in factorising quadratic equations.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and outstanding teaching was seen in a few lessons.

Teachers have very strong subject-specific knowledge, especially with regard to examination and assessment criteria and techniques. Teachers address students' misconceptions well and modify their lesson planning and delivery to maximise opportunities to move students' learning on at a good pace. Teachers generally use assessment well to support students' learning. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students used peer assessment when working in pairs to justify the use of imagery in a particular examination text. This organisation resulted in students' excellent development of new insights into the reasons for using animal imagery to portray characters. Students in a Key Stage 4 physics lesson explained that they had target grades, were informed of their current level after each topic, and knew what to do next to improve their work. This illustrates teachers' ability to challenge and support students and provide good oral feedback during lessons. However, the quality and consistency of teachers' written feedback, through marking, are variable across the school. Leaders are aware of the need to improve the quality of feedback if it is to make a clear contribution to students' knowledge of exactly what they need to do to move up to reach next level or grade.

The curriculum is well matched to students' needs and aspirations. The school is aware of some aspects that could be improved, for example, in reconsidering the inclusion of ICT certification as a development at Key Stage 4. Enterprise education and work-related learning are covered effectively and this contributes to students' excellent outcomes in developing workplace and other key skills for the future. Major changes over the last two years include the introduction of the International Baccalaureate to the sixth form and the switch to a two-year Key Stage 3 and three-year Key Stage 4 curriculum. It is too early to see the impact of these changes on examination results at Year 11. Particular strengths of the curriculum are seen in its language specialism with six languages offered, and in very good cross-curricular provision in ICT. Students participate in a wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities including local, national and international visits. The school also has good provision for gifted and talented students in conjunction with the Centre for Gifted Children, and a wide range of sporting opportunities through the School Sports Coordinator Programme.

The school has well-organised procedures for the care of all students, including comprehensive student support arrangements which include learning mentors and progress leaders. As a result, students are provided with good-quality advice and guidance on academic and pastoral matters. Good induction arrangements ensure that new Year 7 students are supported effectively in their transition from a large number of primary schools across the area. Effective advice and guidance enable students to make informed choices about their post-16 options and a high proportion move on to the sixth form and then to higher education, training or employment. The school makes good use of its ICT system to record and monitor the use of rewards and sanctions, and to liaise with parents in relation to any incidents of low-level disruptive behaviour.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's interim leadership arrangements are working effectively and maintaining the school's high level of performance in students' outstanding outcomes. Leaders are continuing to embed ambition and drive improvements well. They make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities to check on the school's performance. Senior leaders use assessment and tracking data, along with observations of teaching and learning, to hold teachers to account for the progress made by students in their classes. The school effectively promotes equality and tackles discrimination, and the theme of equalities is a regular feature in assemblies or personal and social education lessons. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements. Child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are clear and staff training is up to date, although the school recognises that some minor administrative aspects could be more robust.

Most staff who completed inspection questionnaires were in agreement that they are proud to be a member of staff at Calday and feel involved in what the school is trying to achieve. Although a very large majority agree that the school is well led, a significant proportion of staff is less confident about the role of governors. Inspection evidence found that the governing body is satisfactorily discharging its statutory responsibilities. The governing body is appropriately sub-divided into committees and holds the school to account for its performance. Recent training and development, with the support and advice of the local authority, are helping governors to become more actively involved in evaluation and improvement planning.

The school has a clear awareness of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and this informs its excellent promotion of community cohesion through effective policies, attitudes and ethos. The school's actions have a very beneficial impact on its local community and beyond, for example, through extensive outreach work and partnerships, to which students make an excellent contribution.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Students, including those from beyond the Calday school community, soon settle in to sixth-form life because they are well cared for and given good support and advice by staff. Students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is well-above average and they make good progress in the vast majority of subjects because teaching is good. The school recognises that there are some variations in the rate of progress made, for example, by male and female students and between some subjects. Sixth-form students make a very positive contribution to the school and its wider community through their roles as prefects, school council members, and through charitable and voluntary work. They work well together and develop the independent learning and research skills to effectively prepare them for the future, which, for many students, will include university experience. However, on some occasions teachers miss opportunities to promote group work and additional challenge to help to develop further these skills.

Over 90% of Calday students from Year 11 join the sixth form and retention rates for all students moving from Year 12 to 13 are very high, reflecting the high levels of confidence that they have in the school. The sixth form offers a good range of courses including over 30 subjects at AS or A2 level and the International Baccalaureate programme, thereby providing a curriculum that effectively meets students' needs. Leaders and managers have implemented clear systems to support students and promote equal opportunities. Feedback to students is good, although leaders are aware that the current systems to monitor and track students' progress towards their targets could be more robust.

There are very good partnerships in place to support students' learning, for example, strong links with local universities and colleges. Feedback from students illustrates the positive impact of the partnership with Liverpool University, which allows them access to the library there. Following a request from sixth-formers to be involved in the Engineer

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Education Scheme, the partnership with Unilever has enabled a group of students to participate in this.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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 and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their child's needs are being met, that their child enjoys school and is making enough progress, and that teaching is good. Most also agree that they are kept informed about their child's progress. Inspection evidence confirms all of these views.

A minority of parents and carers feel that the school could do more to help them support their child's learning, and to deal more effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed good or outstanding behaviour in classes and around the school and consider that the school deals appropriately with the relatively few cases of poor behaviour. There was no evidence that the school does not do enough to help parents support their child's learning, although there may be ways in which this can be communicated more effectively.

A large number of parents and carers did not agree that the school is led and managed effectively, although the additional comments written on questionnaires and expressed in the meeting for parents made it clear that most of these concerns related to the role of the governing body, and have been covered elsewhere in this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Calday Grange Grammar 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 198 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1453 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	34	123	62	7	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	69	35	119	60	6	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	28	116	59	22	11	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	36	98	49	15	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	70	35	107	54	9	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	24	97	49	36	18	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	19	112	57	34	17	6	3
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)	54	27	99	50	21	11	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	32	111	56	14	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	18	102	52	27	14	15	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	16	95	48	26	13	23	12
The school is led and managed effectively	17	9	52	26	49	25	58	29
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	32	104	53	20	10	4	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 all 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). 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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



19 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Calday Grange Grammar School, Wirral CH48 8GG

The recent inspection of Calday Grange found that it is a good school with a good sixth form. Thank you for contributing your views by speaking with inspectors in meetings or classrooms and by completing questionnaires. Calday has a number of outstanding features, particularly in students' achievement, because you make consistently good progress to reach high standards of attainment. This contributes to your excellent development of workplace skills and high aspirations for the future.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding and supports your excellent overall development in spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. It is also reflected in the school's outstanding partnerships that contribute greatly to your learning and well-being, and in the excellent contribution that you yourselves make to the school and its wider community.

The school takes good care of you and provides a good curriculum that meets your needs. The school is well led, including during the temporary changes that have been put in place this year. Throughout this time, teaching has remained good or better, as have your own attitudes and behaviour, which is good to see!

Inspectors have been made aware of concerns that some parents and carers and staff have about the role of the governing body in helping to move the school forward, and have taken these into consideration. We agree that there is scope for relationships and communication between governors and parents and carers and staff to be improved, and have made some suggestions for the governing body and school leaders to act upon. You can see these in the full report.

We were pleased to see that these issues are not having a detrimental effect on your education and we encourage you to remain proud of your school and continue to enjoy it as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marguerite Murphy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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