

# Ian Ramsey Church of England Aided Comprehensive School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111764
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	356977
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Hancock 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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1151
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev June Thomas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Wilson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Greens Lane Fairfield, Stockton-on-Tees County Durham TS18 5AJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 34 part-lessons which involved a total of 32 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors met and talked with students in lessons and around the school. They observed the school's work and looked at 259 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others from students and staff. Students' work and school documentation, such as information about how well students are protected and safeguarded and records of students' progress, were examined.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How far the school has succeeded in maintaining and improving overall effectiveness since the last inspection.
- The extent of improvement in the learning and progress of all students, particularly students known to be eligible for free school meals, middle-ability students and low-attaining boys.
- The extent of improvements in assessment procedures and practice.

## Information about the school

Ian Ramsey is a larger than average secondary school which has specialist status in languages. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Nearly all students speak English as their first language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A new headteacher, deputy headteacher, and two assistant headteachers have been appointed in the last year.

**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

Ian Ramsey is a good school which is moving in the right direction. It has recently improved, for example, students are now making better progress and the pace of learning is more rapid. Capacity to improve is good and accurate self-evaluation ensures the key strengths and areas for development are well known. Senior leaders are well supported by good governance and the clear vision of the new headteacher for the future of the school. Governors and seniors leaders know that increasing the rate of school improvement through more detailed planning and robust action in the short and long term is central to achieving even higher standards and results. The specialist status has helped to sustain provision and the school is on track to meet and exceed challenging targets this year. Resources are effectively deployed to achieve good value for money.

Students' progress is more rapid because the school has made it a top priority this year. Inspection evidence confirms school data that learning and progress are good as a result of effective action to improve the achievement of all students, particularly middle-ability boys, girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attainment has been above average for the last three years, for example, 60% of students in 2010 gained five GCSE A\* to C grades including English and mathematics compared with 54% nationally.

Teaching is good and assessment practice is improving. Arrangements for tracking students' progress are more rigorous and the school recognises more can be done to make sure information is well used to improve students' work, for example, by analysing underachievement more frequently and providing learning which is better matched to their needs. The school's strategy to promote community cohesion is good and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Attendance is average. It has steadily declined since the last inspection and more robust action is required to reverse the downward trend by working closely with students, parents, carers, and partners to ensure every chance is taken to achieve more highly. The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is good and they are well cared for, guided and supported.

Leaders and staff have a good understanding of students' needs, which is helping the curriculum to make a greater impact. Students say they feel safe, equality of opportunity is promoted well, and there are good safeguarding procedures in place. Behaviour is good and students take responsibility for their actions while recognising the safety of others. Partnerships to promote learning are a strength as a result of good relationships between local schools and extended services.

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

- Reverse the downward trend in attendance by working closely with students, parents, carers, and partners.
- Increase the rate and pace of school improvement to further raise achievement by:
  - more detailed planning, robust action and evaluation in the short and long term in order to secure even higher standards and results
  - sharing best practice in teaching, learning and assessment.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Learning and progress are good because students are motivated by activities which meet their needs and they are keen to succeed. The right improvements are being made to ensure high-quality learning is consistently delivered, for example, through more frequent monitoring of lessons and tracking to make sure all students are making the progress they should. As a result students, including low-attaining boys, are achieving more highly, particularly in the specialist subjects. This equally applies to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities who make good progress because well-timed intervention is supporting their learning well.

Students have positive attitudes and enjoy learning when the work captures their interest. Behaviour is good and students learn at a brisk pace when they are stretched by work which is well matched to their individual interests. This was exemplified in a Year 8 language lesson where students quickly learned how to talk about breakfast, using German to communicate throughout. Attainment is above average and rising from broadly average starting points for many students. School data indicates that GCSE results are on track to be significantly higher in 2011. Inspection evidence confirms attainment is rising more quickly in Year 10, particularly for the middle-ability students and those known to be eligible for free school meals. The school knows there is more to be done and is making the right changes to increase the rate of progress in all subjects by using more challenging targets.

Students say they feel safe in school and make a good contribution to school and community life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed as a result of the strong and inclusive Christian and school ethos. Attendance is average and the cause of the steady decline since the last inspection is being explored. Students regularly take part in physical and sporting activities and have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Their understanding of the world of work is effectively developed and enrichment activities make a good contribution to the preparation for their future lives.

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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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

The good-quality teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection and is improving. Inspection evidence confirms that the proportion of good teaching is rising. The best teaching increases understanding as a result of good subject knowledge, skilful intervention, a brisk pace and a good mix of practical and group tasks which constantly challenges students' thinking. Teaching is less successful when work lacks variety, is insufficiently tailored to challenge students of all abilities and when too much time is spent listening to the teacher and not learning through individual tasks. The school plans to share best practice more widely to speed up the pace of school improvement.

Assessment practice has significantly improved because teachers are checking progress more frequently and the best practice provides students with clear steps for improvement. When practice is less effective, targets are not always clearly understood, which results in students working less confidently and learning more slowly. The good curriculum is enhanced by the specialist status of the school which helps students to develop a range of transferable skills.

Good care, guidance and support ensure students thrive in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The school works well with partners to guide and support students, for example, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Transfer between schools is supportive and students settle in quickly in their first year due to the good transition arrangements.

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

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The clear vision of the new headteacher and senior leaders is making sure the school continues to improve and that the capacity to improve is good. The governing body provide good challenge and support as a result of receiving accurate information about performance from monitoring and evaluation. The school is right in its ambition to increase the rate of school improvement. It recognises that the action required to make the upward trend more rapid needs to be more rigorous in setting short- and long-term targets and by holding staff more to account for achieving them.

Safeguarding arrangements are good as a result of effective quality assurance and risk-assessment systems. All forms of discrimination and barriers to learning are tackled as a result of the good promotion of equality of opportunity. Good engagement of parents and carers ensures their views are taken into account, for example, through the use of questionnaires. The school successfully promotes community cohesion and has developed local, national and international links well, for example, through the Church of England and other faith communities.

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

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>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

The response from the very large majority of parents and carers agreed the school is well led and managed, and keeps their children safe. They were pleased with their child's experience in the school, and said their child enjoyed school and received good teaching.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ian Ramsey Church of England Aided Comprehensive 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 259 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1151 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	23	174	67	24	9	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	84	32	162	63	9	3	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	22	178	69	21	8	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	23	174	67	19	7	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	23	172	66	19	7	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	19	166	64	26	10	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	12	171	66	40	15	5	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)	58	22	156	60	10	4	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	63	24	175	68	12	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	63	24	150	58	27	10	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	18	158	61	22	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	55	21	168	65	12	5	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	31	152	59	18	7	2	1

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



7 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Ian Ramsey Church of England Aided Comprehensive School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 5AJ**

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Ian Ramsey is a good and steadily improving school.
- GCSE results are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- You feel safe, and the care, guidance and support you receive are good.
- The new headteacher and senior leadership team are making the right improvements to help you achieve even more.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the school even better. To help them do this, we have asked if they would:

- reverse the downward trend in attendance by working closely with students, parents, carers and partners
- increase the rate and pace of school improvement.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

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