



# Parrenthorn High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105358  
**LEA** Bury  
**Inspection number** 277343  
**Inspection dates** 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Michael Blaylock HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Heywood Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Prestwich
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Manchester, Lancashire M25 2GR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 773 8634
<b>Number on roll</b>	706	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 798 7048
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Councillor Davison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 May 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Fitzgerald

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Parrenthorn High School is a small 11-16 mixed comprehensive school serving the communities of Prestwich, part of Whitefield, and the northern edge of Manchester. Its location, adjacent to the large Heaton Park, provides an attractive setting, although it is on the perimeter of the Prestwich area and this presents some challenges for community involvement. There is a diversity of minority ethnic groups in the school, although the overall proportion is below the national average. The number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average, while the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.

The school is popular with parents. This is reflected in an increase in the number of pupils admitted in Year 7, despite the falling number of pupils overall in the Bury authority. The school received Technology College status from September 2004. The recently appointed headteacher (April 2004) knows the school well having previously been a deputy headteacher in the school before gaining wider experience as a deputy head in another school.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Parrenthorn is an effective school providing good education and care for its pupils. It is also an improving school with the capacity for further improvement. The school has successfully addressed issues arising from the previous inspection.

Inspectors agreed with the school's own judgements in the self-evaluation form. Achievement and standards are good, with significant improvements secured in 2005 in both national tests at Year 9 and in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results. Each pupil is valued; the exemplary care and support they receive results in outstanding personal development and well-being.

There is a strong commitment to raising attainment. This agenda is driven by the senior management team, who provide good leadership and management, supported by the highly effective governing body. The school's commitment to high standards and caring for its pupils is translated into good curriculum provision and teaching and learning, with some excellent practice. Increasing consistency and rigour of assessment and translating aspirations into detailed strategic planning are recognised as areas for development to secure further improvement.

The school provides good value for money. Its capacity for further improvement is good and has been strengthened through the appointment of a business manager and the recognition of the leadership roles of middle managers.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to raise standards through high expectations worked out in detailed planning, including raising the achievement of boys.
- Improve the consistency of monitoring and assessment procedures across the whole school in order to implement target setting for individual pupils.
- Develop a coherent strategy for the continuing professional development of staff, which is determined by whole school priorities and responsive to individual needs.
- Encourage wider dissemination of best practice in teaching and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From broadly average levels of prior attainment on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well in all years. The school has taken effective and decisive action to address some underperformance in the first three years. Consequently, standards by the end of Year 9 in 2005 were above average and demonstrate a significant improvement on the previous year. Similarly, performance in GCSE confirms an improving trend; the results in 2005 were the best in the school's history and were above the national average. Results in art, geography and physical education were even better and were high in comparison to those found nationally.

Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys and is well above average. Following disappointing boys' results in 2004, the school established a wide range of strategies to address this underachievement with subject departments placing greater emphasis on curriculum content and teaching methods to foster the engagement of boys. As a result, there was a marked improvement in boys' standards in the 2005 GCSE examinations: the large difference between their performance and the girls was reduced by roughly a half. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the excellent care and support provided by the school. The percentages gaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to G have been consistently above average for the past five years.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils develop into responsible and well-rounded young people. They are keen to learn and are very responsive in most lessons. They support each other well and take pride in their school. Relationships at all levels are strong. Pupils thrive because all individuals feel valued by their classmates and teachers as soon as they enter the school. Large numbers of older pupils have excellent opportunities to contribute through the peer support, peer reading and prefect systems. The high-profile school council gives all pupils an important say in the running of the school. Pupils raise large sums of money for charity and devise anti-bullying and racism leaflets, sometimes as joint initiatives with other schools.

Social and moral development are particularly strong. Clear messages are put across and reinforced in effective assemblies. The personal, social, health and citizenship education programme is carefully thought out and prepares pupils well for their future lives and careers. Pupils' conduct is very good in all areas of the school. They know that any behavioural issues are quickly resolved, through the school's zero tolerance exclusion policy where warranted. Pupils' appreciation of the school is reflected in their above average attendance and in the overwhelmingly positive parents' questionnaire responses. Pupils feel safe and enjoy school a lot because of its welcoming, caring and supportive ethos. As one parent said 'Parrenthorn instils in pupils a sense of self-worth and respect for others'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agreed with the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed, most of the lessons were good, with a number that were outstanding. There are good learning resources and the best teaching creates an open culture with skilled questioning and sensitive attention to individuals. Pupils are willing to learn, and there is excellent behaviour in lessons. Where lessons have

pace and challenge, pupils enjoy taking part and make good progress. In drama, the combination of imagination and self-discipline was particularly impressive.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly strong, with growing availability and use of whiteboards and laptop computers, although not all teachers are fully confident users. The school has chosen to complement provision with sets of laptops, which lend themselves to flexible and imaginative use, including registration. There is some particularly innovative work in technology, facilitated by additional resources from the school's Technology College status. Learning support assistants provide excellent help for children pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. They are aided in this by meticulous learning plans and careful tracking of attainment.

In some lessons, teachers needed to give more thought to how the wide range of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, need different approaches to help them learn more effectively. Lesson observation is used for performance management and professional development; although its use for sharing good practice is underdeveloped.

Assessment arrangements are in place and the school gathers detailed information on how well pupils are progressing. Following training for staff on the value of examination data, many teachers are now more confident in using data to monitor progress and raise standards. However, monitoring and assessment procedures, including the use of tracking information to set individual targets for pupils, are not consistently effective in all subjects.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school offers a good curriculum, with more opportunities for pupils as a result of its new specialism in technology. The recently reorganised timetable is better attuned to pupils' aptitudes and needs. Strategies to raise boys' achievement are proving successful. There is a good balance in subjects and time allocations in Key Stage 3. There is an appropriate range of similar ability and mixed ability groups. Key skills development is good and all pupils receive their full ICT entitlement. At Key Stage 4, the range and flexibility of options are consistent with the size of the school. In partnership with a local college, the school now offers a range of vocational subjects at Key Stage 4; uptake is growing steadily. Placements are, however, limited by the capacity of external providers. GCSE pupils are well supported by booster classes, the study skills option and mentoring to help them succeed in examinations.

There is a wide range of enrichment activities to support pupils' learning. Year 7 pupils are helped to settle in school through the four-day Conway residential. Sport, drama, the choir and foreign visits are particularly popular and successful. Gifted and talented pupils are now beginning to benefit from a tailored programme of activities.

Work-related learning has been audited across the curriculum, and is rightly identified as an area for further development. Nonetheless, careers advice and work experience are well established and 30 Year 10 pupils are involved in mini-enterprise schemes.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that provision is outstanding. There are exceptional arrangements to ease transition between schools, including a residential component at the start of Year 7. Some 40 Year 10 pupils take part in peer mentoring, for which they receive formal training. This is an area in which the school has achieved national recognition, but more importantly helps children to settle into school, maintains support when it is most needed - whether in paired reading or in one-to-one-peer care for vulnerable children.

There is a culture in which young people accept responsibility for each other's well-being. Support assistants (who have also taken part in training) make a huge contribution to the provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Child protection procedures are securely in place and the required checks have been completed. Heads of year (with the exception of Years 7 and 11) remain with their groups for three years: warm relationships and close pastoral care grow from this arrangement, and underpin the school's caring ethos.

The children's delight in their school is palpable, and they talk of it with great commitment and enthusiasm. They appreciate the friendliness of staff and the high standards of behaviour which help them feel safe and confident. In a number of responses to the questionnaire, support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was singled out for particular praise. Excellent relationships with local post-16 providers are supported by strong advice on careers and progression.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

There is good leadership provided by the headteacher whose passion for raising standards of attainment and ensuring that all pupils are cared for provide clear direction and permeate throughout the whole school. The senior management team provides good leadership and is respected and appreciated by the teaching staff. Senior leaders have a high profile around the school, following the example modelled by the headteacher. The leadership role of subject leaders and other middle managers is recognised and encouraged.

Staffing is good, strengthened by a number of recent strategic appointments. The high number of teachers on maternity leave in recent months has been handled well to minimise disruption to teaching. A programme of lesson observation is in place using an agreed format. This could be more effective in identifying areas for improvement as priorities for the professional development of staff. A cohesive strategy for continuing professional development is needed which coordinates the many training opportunities for staff, and takes account of both whole school priorities and individual need.

Governance is exemplary. The governing body and its sub-committees are fully involved in the work of the school. Governors are supportive and committed to the school. They

play a significant part in the life of the school and are also prepared to challenge proposed developments. The long-serving chair of governors and the recently appointed headteacher share a common concern to raise attainment and have forged a strong partnership of mutual confidence based on professional challenge and respect.

The school's self-evaluation is good and has proved accurate for this inspection. At this stage it has been mainly the work of the senior management team, with some local authority support. Further development of the process should involve staff more and to take fuller account of their views. Attaining Technology College status has had a beneficial impact on resources, most notably with laptops for staff use and interactive whiteboards. Accommodation is well used; additional rooms to cater for the expansion in pupil numbers were under construction at the time of the inspection. The many positive developments in the school are recognised by the local authority, which provides continuing support and challenge to the school. Additionally some exemplary practice is shared with other schools in the authority.

Arrangements for financial management are good and the recently appointed business manager monitors spending very effectively, providing the governing body with regular, detailed information about how the budget is being used to support the educational priorities of the school.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school.

We found that your school is a good school. It is also a school that is improving. Last year's good examination results were an improvement, both in Year 9 national tests and at GCSE; indeed, they were the school's best ever at GCSE. Attendance and behaviour are good. Most of you enjoy your school and appreciate the friendliness of the teachers and the excellent help and support they offer you. We were also pleased to see how you treated each other with courtesy and respect.

Your headteacher wants each of you to do the very best that you can. He also wants you to enjoy being in school and to feel safe while you are there and to know that you are valued. This is what other teachers in the school want for you as well. We were impressed by the school's governing body. They are working hard to help Parrenthorn become an excellent school.

We have suggested that your school can continue to improve by letting you know more clearly how well you are doing and how you could do better. (Some subjects already do this well, but we think it will help you if all subjects use similar ways of doing this.) Our other suggestions were:

- to help teachers learn from each other by sharing their experience and good practice; and
- to carefully plan for all teachers to continue learning new things, such as using interactive whiteboards, to enrich their teaching.

Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and other interests and concerns. We appreciated the welcome we were given and your enthusiastic help in the inspection.