



# Central Lancaster High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119770  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291539  
**Inspection dates** 15 June 2006 to 16 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Heather Barnett HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Crag Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Lancaster
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Lancashire, LA1 3LS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 32636
<b>Number on roll</b>	625	<b>Fax number</b>	01524 849586
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr William Deller
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 October 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jonathan Wright

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15 June 2006 - 16 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291539
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Central Lancaster High School is a smaller than average, highly inclusive 11 to 16 school. The school has a fully comprehensive intake and is currently over-subscribed. A high proportion of students come from areas of high deprivation. The school is involved in a wide range of partnership work, has Specialist Visual and Performing Arts College status, Full Service Extended School status, National Healthy School status, Investors in People designation and extensive community links.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the school as outstanding. The school has created an inclusive culture, which encourages all students to achieve their best. The focus placed on ensuring that every aspect of the school meets the needs of each individual leads to the excellent progress made by all. Teaching and learning are good, and teachers have high expectations of the students. The students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and they feel safe, happy and secure. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. The curriculum is excellent and has been developed to match the needs of students closely. The outstanding extra-curricular activities provided are highly valued by all. There are excellent links with numerous external organisations that support the welfare and education of students.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The senior leaders have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school, and are keen to address any issues as soon as they are identified. For example, they are working to improve attendance and ensure all subject areas achieve the same high standards. The inspection team agree with many of the school's judgements provided for the inspection. However, in some areas the school has been too modest in its judgements. Weaknesses from the last inspection have been tackled successfully, and in some cases translated into strengths. The school is extremely well placed to raise standards further. Excellent use is made of data to monitor and improve the performance of staff and students. The school provides excellent value for money.

The Visual and Performing Arts status and Full Service Extended School status have helped improve the provision for students, particularly in enhancing the curriculum and personal development.

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

- Bring standards in all subjects up to those of the most successful subjects.
- Further develop strategies to improve attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Overall, standards and achievement are outstanding. In 2005, the progress made by students between Years 7 to 11 placed the school in the top 4% of schools nationally. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similarly excellent progress. When students join the school, their standards are well below average. However, very rapid rates of progress mean that they reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 3. Key Stage 3 results improved markedly from 2004 to 2005 and school assessment data for this year show that the upward trend is continuing.

Students continue to make rapid progress at Key Stage 4. The progress made by all students from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 has been excellent for the last three years and is showing an upward trend. This is because the school is very successful in raising

students' achievement as they move through the school. Although the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C dropped in 2005, these results were still broadly average. This year, school assessment data show that standards are higher than last year, particularly in the proportion of students expected to gain five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C. In addition, many students will gain a Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in a number of subjects. The specialist status of the school as a centre for the visual and performing arts is having a positive effect on standards in these areas.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Students enjoy school, feel safe and secure and know that adults will listen to them. This is an inclusive school where students from different ethnic backgrounds work well together. Behaviour is good. Students appreciate the reward system and are keen to 'go for gold' and do well. The number of exclusions has dropped considerably as new strategies, for example enabling challenging students to attend for a late afternoon session, are working well. Attendance is average. It is affected by students taking holidays in term time.

Relationships with teachers are excellent. Students have a positive attitude to learning and are keen to attend extra sessions before and after school.

As a specialist Visual and Performing Arts College, emphasis is placed on drama and dance which develops students' self-esteem and good communication skills.

Students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is excellent. The school's focus on a daily two minutes silence has enhanced students' experience of the spiritual and moral dimensions to life. Students are keen to take responsibility and they mature rapidly. Parents appreciate this aspect of the school's work, typified by one parent's comment that the school 'leads children towards an independent, mature lifestyle'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. The teaching and learning working party has been influential in improving teaching through sharing best practice. In nearly all lessons, the use of questioning to consolidate learning and to help students think further and understand better is good. Lessons have a clear structure, which set out clearly at the beginning what is to be learnt and review at the end what learning has taken place. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the management of classroom behaviour, through the effective use of the whole-school discipline policy, is generally good. Relationships with students are encouraging and supportive and motivate students to want to learn. Assessment practice is outstanding. The school uses a wide range of information to track and monitor students' progress and to set challenging targets for improvement.

Students know what these targets are. They know clearly the level they are working at and what they have to do to improve. The use of new technology, especially interactive whiteboards, is helping teachers present their lessons in interesting and imaginative ways which capture and hold students' attention from the outset. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, students are not completely focused on their work and waste some time chatting.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its students. It has been designed to match the needs of all groups of learners and is one of the reasons why students make outstanding progress. In Key Stage 4, courses are planned that give students excellent opportunities to continue their learning into further and higher education. Vocational courses, including GNVQ, NVQ and BTEC courses, are very well developed, both within school and through partnerships with local colleges. There is good progression into post-16 courses. The impact of specialist college status has been highly influential in developing successful courses in visual and performing arts subjects and through extra-curricular activities. Enterprise education is very well promoted. Students with weak basic skills in English and mathematics receive good additional support. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are excellent, especially in sport but also in the arts and other curriculum areas. All statutory requirements are met.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. The key to the school's success is that the headteacher and his staff know every pupil really well. This is a school where every child matters. The school has an excellent system for tracking the personal and academic progress of all students. It sets appropriate individual targets which students understand and make very good progress towards achieving. The support and guidance for students are of the highest order and are appreciated by students and parents. Students who are vulnerable or who have learning or personal difficulties are able to use drop-in services provided by the school nurse and the learning support unit. Students benefit from good quality counselling and lessons on 'anger management'. The school council successfully promotes healthier eating, which has recently led to National Healthy School status. Staff are aware of the procedures for safety and child protection both in school and on educational visits.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and, together with the senior leadership team, has developed a culture of high expectations throughout the school. The progress students make in their time

at the school has improved since the previous inspection and is now excellent. Students are proud of their school and parents are overwhelmingly supportive.

There is a clear understanding of accountability at all levels and senior and middle managers have an accurate view of the standards and progress of all students. The target-setting, monitoring and reviewing process is highly effective and involves the rigorous use of data. Self-evaluation is robust and supports planning and improvement. Performance management is thoroughly embedded and is linked effectively to school priorities. The school is committed to continuing professional development for its staff, with the sharing of good practice being a very strong focus.

The governing body is committed and diligent, and has developed an effective committee structure. They focus closely on the priorities of the school and play an active part in the self-evaluation process. Resources are deployed to good effect, supporting the different needs of students and giving excellent value for money. The school is using the benefits of Visual and Performing Arts status to good effect, particularly in enhancing the curriculum and helping to develop students' personal skills.

Excellent progress has been made in all areas raised in the last inspection and the school is in an extremely strong position to improve even further.

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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>	1	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	1	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>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	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>	1	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>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

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The Students

Central Lancaster High School

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15 June 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed visiting lessons and talking with so many of you. We also read the results of the questionnaire completed by your parents.

This is a summary of our main findings, which I hope will interest you.

The school provides you with an outstanding education. All the staff know every one of you really well and make sure that you have appropriate targets to work towards and the support you need to achieve them. This means that you make excellent progress during your time at school. The teaching you receive is good, your teachers have high expectations of you, and you are keen to do well in lessons. You like the range of subjects you can study and enjoy the extra-curricular activities, especially the sporting and creative ones developed from the school's specialist status. Both you and your parents appreciate the excellent support and guidance that you receive from the school. This helps you to prepare well for work and adult life.

The senior managers of the school have a very clear idea of the strengths of the school and areas for development. They are concentrating on making the school even better and you can help with this. For some of you, attendance is not as good as it should be and you can all work together to improve this. Managers are also working to make sure that all subjects reach the same high standards.

The inspection team hope you are pleased with the things we have said about the school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved.

Yours sincerely

Heather Barnett

Her Majesty's Inspector