

# Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108279
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	301967
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linden Phillips 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	970
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr N Bowmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Robert Foreman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2003
<b>School address</b>	Green Lane Carleton Pontefract West Yorkshire WF8 3NW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01977 722605
<b>Fax number</b>	01977 722609

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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

Carleton Community High School is an average-sized community comprehensive for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 in the Pontefract area. The school gained specialist status in science with mathematics in 2005. The vast majority of students are from White British families. Slightly more than is the average are entitled to free school meals and slightly fewer than the average have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Carleton Community High is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education for its students. The staff work hard to make it welcoming and inclusive so that students enjoy coming to school, evidenced in part by the improved attendance figures which are now above average. The school provides a safe environment where students are well guided and cared for so that their personal development is good. An increasing number of parents are choosing Carleton and most of those who responded to the questionnaire were positive about how the school has supported their children: 'Our child has thrived within this warm, supportive and caring environment.'

Teaching is satisfactory overall and ensures that the standards students reach are around the national average and that, in general, they make the progress expected of them. However, there is insufficient teaching that is good or better to ensure good progress. In public examinations and tests in 2006 the school made steady progress overall in how well students performed, but a number of subjects did not ensure that all students attained as they should. The school's current assessments indicate further improvements in 2007.

The headteacher and governors keep a close eye on how well expenditure is linked to the school's improvement plan. They have been successful in removing a long-standing budget deficit. This leaves the school well placed to improve resources. The school's prudent management of its finances and its ability to maintain improvements in difficult financial circumstances means that the school can show that it provides good value for money.

The school has improved its curriculum in the light of a continuing review. The curriculum is now good and better meets the interests of students giving them more opportunities to achieve at school and then progress to work and study after the age of 16. The school has made good use of its specialist status in science with mathematics. Standards have risen in both science and mathematics and a wide range of enrichment activities has been introduced to broaden students' experience in the specialist subjects.

Carleton school works effectively with a number of partners to help students make the transition from their primary schools and also to offer students a broader range of subjects and experiences.

In many aspects the school has made steady, but not always rapid, progress. Many middle managers, such as departmental heads and learning managers, are now using the school's detailed information on the students progress to help them raise attainment, although this is better used in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. Most managers have well-founded plans to maintain the momentum of improvement, but there is inconsistency. Reorganisation of the senior team is designed to strengthen leadership capacity and support. The headteacher sets a clear direction which has the achievement and well-being of students at its centre. His very good leadership has been purposeful, thoughtful and energetic in addressing issues from the last inspection and has ensured that the school has a good capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the learning also improves and results in a better rate of progress across all subjects.
- Refine tracking procedures at Key Stage 3 to support the whole school approach to raising standards and achievement.

- Build on the school's current capacity to strengthen senior leadership and provide further focussed guidance across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Students make satisfactory progress throughout their time at school and they reach standards which are broadly average. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress across all years.

By the end of Year 9 students attain average standards in English, mathematics and science, reflecting satisfactory achievement. In 2006, for the first time, standards were above average in all three subjects, although a smaller proportion of students than the national figure reached the higher levels in English and science. The school's most recent information indicates that this summer's overall results are unlikely to be as high, but given students' particular starting points, progress rates will be maintained.

The proportion of students gaining five A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics increased in 2006 to just below national expectations, maintaining previous trends of improvement. This represents satisfactory achievement, but also highlights that the school is successful in ensuring that students are enabled to gain English and mathematics qualifications. Similarly, the number of students gaining five passes at A\* to C level in GCSE or equivalent qualifications increased, although below average. Students attained highly in English, mathematics, science and vocational subjects, but many fell well short of their targets in other subjects in 2006. The school has put into place a range of strategies to reduce such inconsistencies, including more rigorous procedures to check students' progress. Current standards of students' work show that these strategies have begun to work and the school expects to see considerable improvements in the subjects which performed less well in 2006. The school has also increased the range of courses on offer to match more closely students' requirements, particularly for those boys who do not achieve as well as they do earlier in the school. The latest performance information held by the school indicates that these measures are bringing about further gains in attainment.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students are proud to be members of this community. The positive relationships evident in classrooms and around communal areas are indicative of good moral and social development. There are fewer opportunities, though, to develop spiritual and cultural awareness and understanding. Effective action by the school has resulted in good behaviour, attendance and punctuality. The vast majority of students enjoy learning and are keen to come to school and the general view was summed up by one student that Carleton is, 'a great place to be. the best school'. Most students feel very safe in school and when bullying or racist incidents do occur, students know who to turn to resolve matters. Many students are increasingly adopting healthy lifestyles because they have been involved in discussions about how the school can promote them. For example, students were consulted about the removal of some vending machines and about encouraging the use of bicycles to travel to school. Students generally act in a very

responsible manner and many readily take on extra key responsibilities around the school. Students in the library, on corridor duty, or acting as 'buddies' make a positive impact on the life of the school and those on the school council play a very real part in shaping the future of the school. The fostering of good habits, the development of the basic skills and a growing knowledge of the world of work mean that many students leave the school well equipped for further education, training or employment.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there is considerable variation in the quality of individual lessons. Teachers are well qualified and knowledgeable in their subjects. In most lessons very good relationships exist between teachers and students so that students do what is asked of them, behave well and work hard. In good lessons, nice touches of humour enliven the proceedings and students clearly enjoy the experience. Teachers generally follow the school's accepted pattern for lessons and tell students what they are expected to learn, providing some security in how lessons will proceed. However, there is less consistency in how well students learn in different groups. In good lessons, students move quickly between activities, carefully chosen to reinforce what students need to learn and remember. In less effective lessons, things move more slowly, tasks are not particularly demanding or engaging and teachers sometimes talk for too long, so that students' concentration weakens.

Students in different groups receive varying amounts of homework and the school has recently introduced a timetable to encourage more regular setting of homework tasks. Most teachers mark students' work regularly and give helpful advice about how the work could be improved. However, there are also instances of superficial marking where errors are not picked up and corrected. Assessment systems are well established in Years 10 and 11 and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9, so that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to reach the next level or grade. The school is beginning to extend its assessment and tracking in Years 7 to 9 so that students can be better informed about their progress in all subjects.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The overall curriculum is good and is increasingly meeting students' needs and aspirations. Effective links with partner primary schools, and specialist Year 7 teaching arrangements, ensure a smooth transition from Year 6. By the age of 14 students have a widening choice of GCSE and vocational courses, supported by effective partnerships with local colleges of further education and businesses. Innovative work with other secondary schools, including two local independent schools, is enhancing specialist provision for science and mathematics, including AS level qualifications in mathematics. A strong programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education tackles human rights issues, healthy lifestyles and personal effectiveness, and prepares students well for future learning and the world of work. Local employees and the Compact organisation contribute effectively to good work experience and successful enterprise opportunities. St Mary's Community Centre provides additional valuable information and communication technology and library resources outside school. Students' learning is enriched

and their motivation increased through a wide range of school visits and in sports, arts and curriculum-related events.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good guidance and support for all students which contribute well to their personal development and well-being and increasingly to their progress and achievement. This is an inclusive school where staff work hard and imaginatively to meet the needs of students. For example, in Year 7, a small group of students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties is given extra help to become more confident to cope with and succeed in a large high school. The student welfare team, learning mentors and support assistants work effectively with a range of external agencies, such as Turning Point and Connexions, to give students the guidance and support they need. Vulnerable students, including looked after children, are supported well and increasingly their progress is improving. Fixed term exclusions are around that of the national average, and falling and permanent exclusions are very rare. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place. Student tracking systems in Key Stage 4 are becoming increasingly robust so that students and their parents are aware of their progress towards increasingly challenging targets. Careers education and guidance is comprehensive: more students are moving into education, training or employment at the age of 16. Although some parents have concerns around behaviour and communication the majority are very positive about the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good and is a strength of the school. He is open and honest about the school's areas for improvement and has established a common sense of purpose among staff at all levels. He has successfully dealt with various difficult financial and staffing problems and, although the reorganisation of the leadership team is incomplete, has made some significant improvements which are starting to have an impact on students' achievement. In particular attendance has improved, the curriculum has been broadened and a better tracking system is now giving valuable information to teachers about students' progress in Years 10 and 11. Some of the improvements have not been made as quickly as they might, notably in the quality of teaching which remains satisfactory. The senior leadership team as a whole, is supportive and hard-working, but is not yet sufficiently innovative and proactive in moving the school forward. The reorganisation of the senior team for September is a sensible plan for increasing the capacity.

GCSE results in some of the optional subjects were not as good as they should have been in 2006, partly the result of weaknesses in the management of some subjects. Changes have been made and leadership of departments has improved, although several inexperienced team leaders are not receiving as much precise guidance as they need in order to develop their skills. The result is that inconsistencies in practice remain both within and between departments.

The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate and inspectors agree with most of the school's judgements. For example, the school rightly judges its teaching and learning to be satisfactory, suitably matching its judgement on students' current achievement. However, the school's

individual lesson observations give a more positive picture than is justified by how well students are actually doing. This is because the observations concentrate too much on what the teacher does, rather than how well students learn.

The governing body is well informed about the school and realistic in its understanding that some improvements are still needed. Although the school has a history of low funding and had a large budget deficit, it has ensured satisfactory progress and so provides good value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

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

**Annex A****Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Inspection of Carleton Community High School, Carleton, WF8 3NW

Thank you all very much for your welcome to Carleton Community High School and for sharing your views with us. We enjoyed talking with you and were impressed by your good behaviour and the contribution you make to your school. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school and we can see why. The staff at Carleton make a lot of effort to make sure you are happy and safe and that all of you feel included.

Mr Foreman is a very good headteacher. Under his leadership the school has improved much of the provision for you. The curriculum offers you more choice and some exciting opportunities to work with other schools and colleges. Your teachers and staff make sure you have good guidance and advice. Working with the school you have improved your overall attendance and it was good to see the Year 10 forms receive their Good Attendance rewards.

The majority of you are making progress in lessons, but inspectors agree with the school that you could do even better. The school has high aspirations for you and is looking at ways to improve lessons so that you always learn effectively and are confident in new skills and knowledge.

Most of your parents are very happy with the school. Replies to our questionnaire indicated areas that some parents would like improved. We agree with the school that it is still improving and we have asked them to do these things:

- make sure that all lessons help you learn well and achieve well
- give you more information, particularly in Years 7, 8 and 9, about what you need to do to improve
- add to the school leadership team so that Mr Foreman has more help in working with you to keep the school moving forward.

We hope you continue to work well with your teachers and staff to achieve the very best you can and we wish you well for the future.