

Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108279
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	337050
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	972
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Bowmer
Headteacher	Mr Robert Foreman
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
School address	Green Lane Carleton Pontefract WF8 3NW
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan, governing body reports, the school's monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 46 parents and carers, 605 students and 38 staff.

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

- the attainment and progress of different groups of students
- the quality of leadership and management at all levels and their effectiveness in bringing about improvement
- the effectiveness of the curriculum and care, guidance and support in meeting the range of students' needs
- the quality of teaching and assessment across the school.

Information about the school

Carleton Community High School is of average size with very few minority ethnic students. The proportion eligible for free school meals is broadly average and other measures of social disadvantage are also average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. In October 2008, the school had a serious fire which destroyed half the buildings. It was provided with temporary accommodation on the school site from January 2009. The school is a specialist science college and a designated Training School. It has the Healthy Schools, Sportsmark and Artsmark awards.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Carleton Community High School is a good school. As a result of good leadership, the school has continued to improve despite the disruption of a major school fire. The clear direction provided by the headteacher has resulted in improved attainment and progress for students, higher attendance, better quality teaching and a curriculum better matched to the full range of students' needs. These successes underlie the school's good capacity for sustained improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels share an ambitious vision for the school and have increasingly high expectations of students. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, staff and governors effectively plan and carry out actions to improve the school. Morale is high and all staff are keen to contribute to school improvement.

Achievement is good and attainment is broadly average. Over the last three years, students' improved rates of progress have led to a steady increase in the proportion gaining five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics. Students also make good progress in science and the school has met its specialist school targets in science and mathematics. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making only satisfactory progress. This is due to lack of promptness and precision in assessing and meeting their needs.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They are proud of their school and get on well with teachers and other adults. Students are polite, friendly and courteous. They feel safe and respect each other and there is little bullying. Behaviour is good. Attendance has improved in recent years and is above average and persistent absence has also been reduced. Students lack real opportunities to engage with and learn about people from different cultural backgrounds in Britain and in the rest of the world.

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The use of assessment and target-setting has improved and is generally good. Teachers make effective use of assessment criteria to give students information about the level they are working at and to let them know what to do to improve. Increasingly effective use is being made of peer assessment. However, the assessment of the learning needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not sufficiently rigorous and does not lead to clear plans and specific action.

The curriculum has been redesigned since the last inspection and now more closely meets the needs of all groups of learners at both key stages. At Key Stage 4, lower ability students on vocational courses are on track to do better than similar students in previous years who followed the traditional academic route. The specialism and the

school's partnerships with external organisations make a distinctive contribution to the enrichment of the curriculum within and beyond the school day.

Pastoral care is good and makes an effective contribution to students' development and well-being, especially their emotional and mental well-being. As a result of the closer and more personal support of vulnerable or disengaged students, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of students continuing in education, training or employment when they leave school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to above average by increasing the proportion of students that meet or exceed their target grades.
- Improve the progress and attainment of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring that needs are identified accurately, acted on promptly and met effectively.
- Improve students' awareness of cultural diversity in Britain and the rest of the world by creating real opportunities for engagement with people from other cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The quality of students' learning and progress is good. In the majority of lessons students make good progress because clear outcomes are set for them and they are motivated by activities that are imaginatively resourced. Students concentrate well and are keen to do well. They enjoy their learning, are keen to answer questions and have the confidence to ask when they do not understand. Occasionally, the misbehaviour of a small minority of students disrupts the learning of others.

In 2009, a higher proportion gained A* and A grades at GCSE and almost all students left with at least one GCSE qualification. Most students make good progress. However, in the recent past small numbers of students who were eligible for free school meals, and some who had low attainment when they started at the school, made less than expected progress. These groups are now provided with a more appropriate curriculum at both key stages, which is leading to improved progress.

Students have good awareness of healthy lifestyles including their emotional and mental health as well as their physical fitness. The few who find difficulty in managing their own behaviour know when and where to go for help. Students are well prepared for their future lives. They have high aspirations, including university entrance. They are punctual. The good opportunities to develop skills in real-life contexts promote students' self-esteem and lead to a sense of achievement. Older students set younger ones a good example. Year 11 students who act as 'senior ambassadors', showed their maturity when explaining the importance of 'always being willing to help and listen'. Students in Year 9 play a valued role as 'buddies' for those new to the school, enabling them to feel part of the school community quickly.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Enrichment activities in science, such as meeting astronauts and visiting a planetarium inspired students'

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

sense of awe and wonder. Year 9 students listened intently to 'The Last Post' played by four students at the start of a Remembrance Day assembly, applauding spontaneously yet without detracting from the seriousness of the occasion. Students have good opportunities to participate in sports and arts activities. However, their cultural understanding and awareness of community cohesion are less well developed because the school provides limited opportunities for students to learn about and appreciate the multicultural diversity of Britain and the rest of the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers consistently make good use of learning objectives. Clear outcomes for lessons are shared with students accompanied by lively starter activities. Explanations are precise and well judged, supported by detailed planning, purposeful questioning and well structured tasks. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards and other new technology. Teachers manage students' behaviour well and ensure that they are focused and engaged. In the best lessons, the pace is rapid and challenging tasks ensure that students are absorbed in activity. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is sometimes caused

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

by teachers moving on to the next task too quickly, without drawing out the learning, and as a result, students are not always sufficiently involved.

At Key Stage 3, varied curriculum pathways provide an appropriate range of courses, both for the most vulnerable and low ability as well as the more-able students. Some students in Years 7 and 8 who follow a more topic-based curriculum are making good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. At Key Stage 4, a good variety of academic and vocational qualifications are offered. Some students take a reduced number of subjects alongside a work placement which is developing their workplace skills and their confidence to progress into the world of work. There is good provision for all students to develop work-based learning through work experience, links with local organisations and enterprise days. Higher ability and gifted and talented students have good opportunities to take additional courses, for example in twilight sessions. A good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in the specialist subjects of science and mathematics, sports and arts, enhances students' personal development.

The support for vulnerable students and their families provided by pastoral and support staff is particularly good. Students voluntarily offered many striking examples of occasions when the school helped them to sort out problems both in and out of school. As a result, these students hold the school in high esteem; they want to do their very best and are ambitious. Effective systems succeed in promoting good attendance and reducing exclusions. Good quality advice, support and guidance help students to make informed and confident choices about their options in school and in the future. The highly effective pastoral care systems, designed to provide holistic care, do not embrace fully provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous and lead to the identification of clear and appropriate priorities for development. Effective strategies for gathering the views of different groups, including parents, carers and students, help to give senior leaders an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could do even better. Systems of accountability are effectively challenging and members of staff receive good management support for their professional development. Robust action is taken to tackle any weaknesses in teaching or management. Subject leaders play a central role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and its impact on students' progress

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

towards their targets. They have good opportunities to be involved in strategic decision making and planning. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school and is effective in providing an appropriate level of challenge and support. Governors' skills and experience are put to good effect.

There are considerable strengths in the stringent vetting procedures for adults working in school and for the identification and support of students who are most at risk. Child protection procedures are in place but not all staff have undertaken recent training, though this is planned. The school has an effective and positive relationship with parents and carers, with good communication about the life and work of the school and the progress of individual students. The school works effectively with a wide range of partners. An outstanding feature is the partnership with an independent school which enables students to access AS level qualifications early, in mathematics and science. The school works to improve equal opportunities, for example in its investigation into the underachievement by a particular socio-economic group of girls. However, it has not tackled the slower progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school understands its community well and effectively promotes cohesion in the school and local community. The school acknowledges that further work needs to be done to expand students' experience and appreciation of different cultures.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are positive about all aspects of the school. They were most positive about the safety of their children, the

quality of teaching, the experience their children are having at the school, their enjoyment and the guidance they receive in moving from one stage of learning to the next. They were least positive about behaviour, and the help for healthy lifestyles. A few gave additional comments. A very few raised concerns about the response to their children's special educational needs. Inspectors agreed with the positive view of the school and the need to meet special educational needs and/or disabilities more effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 972 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	35	23	48	7	15	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	38	26	54	3	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	27	26	54	2	4	3	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	23	28	58	3	6	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	10	21	34	71	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	15	30	63	6	13	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	5	10	30	63	8	17	1	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)	13	27	29	60	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	25	22	46	10	21	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	19	24	50	8	17	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	15	28	58	7	15	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	46	18	38	3	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	38	24	50	3	6	2	4

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupil's 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.



12 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Carleton Community High School A Specialist Science College, Pontefract, WF8 3NW

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a good school. These were the things we liked most about your school.

- The school has continued to improve, despite the impact of the fire.
- Students are making good progress in gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics.
- You have good opportunities to do practical courses that meet your needs.
- Lessons are good, you enjoy your learning and you get good feedback on your progress.
- Students with difficulties get good support from staff.
- Through the specialism you do interesting things to do with science and mathematics.
- school is well led and staff are highly committed to further improvement.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that senior leaders should:

- improve your attainment and progress by increasing the proportion of you who meet or exceed your target grades
- improve the progress and attainment of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities by ensuring that needs are identified accurately, acted on promptly, and met effectively
- improve your awareness of cultural diversity in Britain and the rest of the world by creating real opportunities for engagement with people from other cultures.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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