

Ecclesfield School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107142
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	363718
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett 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	1739
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob Walker
Headteacher	Mr Rob Rossides
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 50 lessons taught by different teachers and met groups of students, staff, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation form, development plan and students' achievement data. Inspectors also looked at the 259 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers plus questionnaire responses from staff and students.

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

- Achievement in all subjects, especially English, to see if there has been sufficient improvement across the school and whether any gaps in performance between different groups of students are closing.
- The quality and consistency of teaching and how well lessons meet the needs of students of all abilities.
- The quality of assessment and how effectively it is used to accelerate learning.
- The effectiveness with which leaders and managers at all levels are driving improvement.

Information about the school

Ecclesfield School is a much larger than average secondary school. Most students are White British and very few speak English as an additional language. A smaller than average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is low but the percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is around average. The school has specialist status in visual and performing arts.

The school was inspected in March 2010 and given a notice to improve. It required significant improvement in relation to students' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 4 and the leadership and management of teaching and learning. At the monitoring inspection in November 2010 the school was making satisfactory progress in tackling the issues.

There have been considerable changes in leadership since the last inspection. The headteacher retired in October and the associate headteacher, who had worked with the senior team since the inspection, was appointed as interim headteacher. Other changes include the appointment of two deputy headteachers and two assistant headteachers.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The new headteacher has provided very strong and dynamic leadership. His ambitious long-term plans for the school have motivated staff and raised aspirations. He has built a very strong and capable senior leadership team that is supporting the development of middle leaders very well. Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have worked very hard and very successfully to make up lost ground since the last inspection. Students say that the new headteacher listens to them, behaviour is improved and they are enjoying learning much more. There is increasing confidence and optimism in the school as the impact of new initiatives becomes clear. The growing momentum seen at the monitoring visit in November has continued to build and the pace of improvement is rapid.

Attainment has risen during this year and is broadly in line with national averages. Early entry GCSE results and the school's data suggest that Year 11 examination results will be much better this year. The rate of progress made by students is continuing to increase and learning and progress were good or better in a large majority of lessons observed. There are some gaps in the performance of different groups of students but they vary from year to year. Any under-performance is carefully monitored and action taken.

Behaviour is much improved. Students are polite, show respect for each other and are very welcoming. The increased staff presence on corridors and the introduction of closed-circuit television cameras ensure that movement between lessons is brisk and orderly. The amount of litter, an issue at the last inspection, is greatly reduced. Attendance has improved and is above average.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are very strong and, as a consequence, teaching is much improved and is now good. The lesson observation system is very robust and accurate. It effectively identifies best practice which is used to support a high-quality in-house professional development programme. The proportion of outstanding and good teaching is growing and inadequate teaching has been almost eradicated. The use of assessment to support learning is much more effective and widespread than at the last inspection but the quality of marking is still too variable. The curriculum is good and is having a positive impact on outcomes for students. The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive and participation is high. Care, guidance and support are good and students whose circumstances make them especially vulnerable are supported well.

Leadership, including governance, is considerably stronger and has been a major factor in the rapid improvement of the school. Leaders are focused on making the school outstanding and are driving improvements at a fast but well-judged pace. Self-evaluation

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is accurate and future planning is strong. Outcomes for students and the quality of provision have improved considerably over the last year and the pace continues to quicken demonstrating a good and growing capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by targeting groups where progress is less than expected.
- Improve the consistency and quality of marking by utilising the excellent practice that already exists in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school is successfully tackling the under-achievement of recent years. Students join the school with broadly average Key Stage 2 results but attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has been significantly below average in recent years. However, the legacy of weak provision is being overcome. Both early entry GCSE results and the school's data suggest that overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 will be much higher this year and very close to the national average. Students lower down the school are making increasingly better progress. Students are making faster progress in English as a result of better teaching and early entry GCSE results show improvement. There are still variations between different groups of students but they are not consistent across year groups. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities perform in line with targets that are commensurate with other groups and their progress is accelerating. Students work hard in lessons, learning proceeds at a swift pace and participation in discussion is good. Frequent checks show that good learning is taking place in most lessons and students are very keen to do well.

Attendance is above average and the number of persistent absentees is reducing quickly. Students say that behaviour has improved a lot over the last year, they feel safe in school and bullying is not an issue. They are confident that they can take any concerns to an adult and they would be supported well. There is high participation in the wide range of sporting activities and students are well-informed about healthy lifestyles but too many are tempted by the unhealthy food available in the canteen. Students' personal development is good. The specialism fosters a good appreciation of different cultures and spiritual awareness is developed well through the curriculum and additional events such as interfaith week. Students have a much stronger and more effective role in contributing to decisions and giving their views. Student representatives meet governors and senior leaders, take part in the selection of new teachers and contribute to lesson observations. Prefects are playing a valuable part in improving behaviour and reducing litter.

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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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teaching has improved quickly. In most lessons learning is fun and students participate well. Activities are tailored to match the varying needs of students in the class and separate resources are often provided to match the range of ability. Creative starter activities are used to engage students very early in the lesson. There is mutual trust between teachers and students and teachers create opportunities for students to debate and to challenge each other. Questioning is effective and used to stretch the most-able students as well as to probe misunderstandings and check on learning. Teaching assistants are deployed well. Self- and peer-assessment are used well and, there are examples of excellent marking and feedback. However, the quality is not of a consistently high standard.

The curriculum is personalised to meet students' needs and is having a positive impact on students' outcomes. Students in Key Stage 4 value the wide range of courses on offer. Extra-curricular provision is a particular strength offering opportunities for students to gain additional qualifications, take on responsibility and develop their social and personal skills. The specialist subjects play a leading role in curriculum development, particularly enrichment activities, and are also proactively engaging students at risk of becoming disaffected. Cross-curricular literacy and numeracy links are evident and the school has plans in place to develop this aspect further.

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There are good links with external agencies to help meet individuals' specialist needs. The school works hard to ease the transition from primary school by offering summer activities to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils and proactively seeking information about those joining the school, especially any whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Good-quality careers advice is available to students choosing Key Stage 4 options and those preparing to leave school. Work with disaffected students is increasingly effective and the number of students who do not go on to further education, employment or training is low.

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?

The headteacher provides very good strategic leadership that has revitalised the school and given staff and students a new sense of purpose. By utilising strengths of the existing team and making very good new appointments, he has built a very effective and cohesive senior leadership team quickly. Together they have played a major role in improving the quality of provision and outcomes for students. Senior leaders act as very good role models for the middle leadership team and provide excellent support. As a result, middle leaders are developing quickly and taking increasing responsibility for driving improvements. Leaders at all levels set challenging targets and communicate clear expectations. Quality assurance is good and involves much more effective use of data. The school has a very accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and knows exactly how to prioritise actions and bring about further improvement. Operational management is very efficient. Governance has improved considerably and new governors have brought valuable additional expertise. Effective training has made the governing body more aware of its role and able to provide ample challenge and support to senior leaders. The governing body increasingly seeks out the views of staff and students.

There are much closer links with local schools that enable Ecclesfield students to meet those from different backgrounds and cultures. Partnerships with other schools also facilitate the sharing of good practice and support the professional development of leaders and teachers. The school is building its reputation in the local community by making a growing contribution to community projects. Plans to promote community cohesion are based on a thorough analysis of needs. They are monitored, reviewed and refined as appropriate. The school is developing stronger links nationally, for example, through an on-line event to improve boys' reading, organised through the specialism. Partnerships with schools in the developing world, including India, Borneo and Tanzania are promoting international understanding and awareness. Communication with parents and carers has been improved recently but the school recognises the need to consult more. It has helped parents and carers of Year 11 students to support their children as they prepare for

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national examinations and will extend this work across other year groups. Procedures to keep students safe are very secure and safeguarding is well-integrated into the management of pastoral care. The school works hard to promote equality and monitors different groups of students carefully to identify and tackle any gaps in performance. The gender gap is narrowing and although boys lag behind girls in English on entering the school their progress is improving. The school manages resources and finances very carefully and outcomes for students are now good. The school provides good value for money.

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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from around 15% of parents and carers and they were largely positive. A very large majority thinks that the school keeps their child safe and are happy with their child's experience at the school. Parents' and carers' major concern is the school's contribution to promoting healthy lifestyles. Inspectors found that students are aware of how to stay healthy and they participate well in sporting activities but there are too many unhealthy options available in the canteen. Parents and carers are also concerned about behaviour but inspectors found that behaviour was good in the majority of lessons and that students behaved well around the school. Their other major concerns were a lack of consultation and help to support their child's learning. The school acknowledges that it needs to work more closely with parents and carers and initiatives have already been introduced.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ecclesfield 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 1739 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	27	161	62	23	9	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	66	25	180	69	10	4	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	26	172	66	14	5	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	78	30	146	56	31	12	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	18	169	65	30	12	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	15	158	61	49	19	6	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	10	170	66	52	20	1	0
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)	48	19	171	66	22	8	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	21	172	66	24	9	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	22	140	54	41	16	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	12	158	61	42	16	6	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	14	180	69	31	12	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	26	166	64	20	8	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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:	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. ■ 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 pupils' 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.



8 July 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Ecclesfield School, Sheffield, S35 9WD

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Following the inspection in March 2010, when the school was given a notice to improve, leaders were asked to make a number of important improvements. I am delighted to tell you that, as a result of the changes that have been made, Ecclesfield is now a good school.

Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Students in all year groups are making increasingly better progress.
- Attendance is above-average and behaviour is good.
- Teaching has improved and is good overall with pockets of excellent teaching and very little that is inadequate.
- The curriculum is good and participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities is high.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are good.
- Leadership is very strong and leaders, including governors, have made significant improvements to many aspects of the school since the last inspection.

In order to improve further we have asked the school to:

- improve examination results by targeting groups where progress is less than expected
- improve the consistency and quality of marking by utilising the excellent practice that already exists in the school.

The headteacher and his team have very ambitious plans for the school and we hope that you give them your full support. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jan Bennett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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