

The Radclyffe School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105738
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	355831
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Chambers 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	1,340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Greenwood
Headteacher	Hardial Hayer
Date of previous school inspection	24 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 35 lessons, each taught by a different teacher, and held meetings with groups of students, staff and a member of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, together with 171 parental questionnaires.

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

- In which subjects do students achieve best?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and does the school have an accurate view of them?
- Has the school made sufficient progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection?
- What aspects of leadership and management have contributed most to improving outcomes for students?

Information about the school

The Radclyffe School is much larger-than-average, and serves mainly urban communities in Chadderton and the neighbouring areas of Oldham and north-east Manchester. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students for whom English is not the first language is much higher than in most schools. The very large majority of the school population is from three ethnic groups: approximately 45% are White British, 25% Bangladeshi and 20% Pakistani. The school is designated a High Performing Specialist School with specialist status in technology, and holds a number of awards, including Investors in People, International School and Sportsmark. Since the last inspection, the school has moved into a new single-site set of buildings with modern facilities.

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

The Radclyffe School is a good school, where students achieve well. Outstanding care, guidance and support and excellent relationships between students and adults are helping to raise students' aspirations very effectively. Good teaching means that students progress well in lessons. Teachers are willing to try new ideas and benefit considerably from sharing their expertise with colleagues. Effectively-structured lessons and well-chosen activities contribute to the good pace of students' learning.

Students enter the school with attainment levels that are below average. Recent examination results in Year 11 are broadly average: for example, in 2010 51% of students gained five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, compared with a national average of 54%. This represents good progress relative to students' starting points. Within the picture of average attainment overall, there is considerable variation between different subjects. For example, while the proportion of students gaining two science GCSEs at grades A* to C is above average, attainment in both English and mathematics is below average. The school recognises that the proportion of students gaining passes at the highest A* and A grades is below average and has appropriate plans to focus more teaching on providing a consistently strong level of challenge to the most-able students.

Leaders and managers are very successfully generating a common sense of purpose in the school community and setting high expectations. Ambitious targets are helping to drive up standards in several subject areas. In addition, the school's excellent curriculum is contributing to raising attainment and is beginning to have an impact on encouraging students who might otherwise become disengaged to attend regularly. After two years when it has been low, attendance has shown some recent improvement and is now broadly average. Promoting good attendance needs to remain a focus for the school in order to consolidate these improvements. A small minority of students show casual attitudes to punctuality and move slowly between lessons.

The school demonstrates good capacity to improve. Overall, results at GCSE have shown impressive rises, although the improvements including English and mathematics are more modest. The drop in the number of students excluded from school demonstrates that behaviour has improved. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate and good progress is evident in most of the areas for

improvement identified at the last inspection. Improvement planning is good, is well coordinated across the school, and involves contributions from a wide range of staff.

The school's specialist status makes a sound contribution to raising standards. Although results in mathematics, and design and technology are below average, results in other technology subjects, information and communication technology (ICT) and science are among the strongest in the school. The specialism's contributions to the community include strong liaison with feeder primary schools and the provision of ICT classes for members of the local community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics
- Increase the proportion of students gaining GCSE passes at the highest grades through providing more consistent challenge in lessons, particularly for the most-able students
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students from all ethnic groups achieve well. Similarly, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support that helps them to keep pace with the progress of their peers. Students make outstanding progress in vocationally-orientated courses, such as in science, sport and art, where they show interest and are keen to do well. Students make good progress and enjoy their learning especially when they are actively engaged, such as in paired work or well-focused sorting activities. Some benefit from opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, particularly in English and modern language lessons.

Students show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and say that bullying is rare. Their feeling of safety is enhanced by the security of the school site, which includes secure fencing, electronically-operated interior doors and CCTV. They also show an excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Students enjoy sport and dance, and many participate in additional activities, such as trampolining. Behaviour is good overall. Although a small minority exhibits challenging behaviour, students respond well to adult supervision and direction, in lessons and around the school.

Students make a good contribution to the school and the local community through, for example, taking up positions of responsibility, mentoring younger students or raising money for charity. Students demonstrate a satisfactory development of workplace skills, with examination results suggesting that they leave with sound levels of key skills. Many students finishing Year 11 choose to continue their studies in college and the proportion of recent leavers not in employment, education or training is below average. Students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is enhanced through activities such as the culture and diversity theme day for Year 7 and the Age Concern exchange project.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good, rather than outstanding as judged by the school. Teachers plan well; they benefit from using the school's common template and opportunities to plan in collaboration with colleagues. Teachers use questioning well to gauge students' understanding and adjust the pace of the lesson accordingly. In the best lessons, teachers enhance learning through appropriate reference to level or grade criteria; as a result, students gain understanding of the level at which they are working and how they can improve. Other strong lessons include lively, creative input from the teacher which successfully engages the students and generates interest in the work. In the less successful lessons, teachers fail to cater sufficiently for the range of abilities within the class.

The broad and balanced curriculum is very responsive to the changing needs of the students, and this is recognised through several awards that the school holds. For example, school leaders are adapting the curriculum to reflect the changing ability profile of the students attending, and students' views led recently to managers changing when transitions to the next curricular stage occur. In Key Stage 3, seven cross-curricular days per year are helping to develop students' personal qualities, such as leading a healthy lifestyle. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers a wide range of opportunities, particularly in science, ICT and technology. Very effective collaboration with other local schools means that students have opportunities to study one of three different diploma courses. For students following these courses, strong partnerships with local businesses help to focus students' assignments on local needs. Students speak very positively about the wide variety of enrichment activities available to them.

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, based around a well-established support system that demonstrates very strong concern for and commitment to the welfare of all students. Support for students' personal needs is comprehensive, inclusive and coordinated very effectively. Managers keep track of

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

students' progress very well through a system that monitors both personal and academic development. The role of the personal learning guide, each responsible for about 12 students, is central to a system that focuses very well on the needs of the individual. Teachers and other support workers link very effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to strengthen further the guidance and support offered.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers use targets effectively to drive up standards, with notable success in many areas of the curriculum. The school's robust system of monitoring and predicting students' performance suggests that recent improvements can be sustained. A strong sense of teamwork is leading to high levels of motivation across the staff. Leaders and managers foster students' positive attitudes to achievement through the many prominent displays of the success achieved by recent school leavers. The school enjoys a growing reputation locally, with more parents of Year 6 students seeking admission for their children than in the past. Regular newsletters and reports of individual progress help parents and carers to feel well-informed about the work of the school.

Members of the governing body fulfil their duties well: they have a role in strategic planning and have a clear understanding of their role in supporting and challenging school leaders. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Site security is excellent, the school's records of checks on staff are exemplary and all appropriate procedures are reviewed regularly. The school has been notably successful in promoting community cohesion. Within the school community students from different ethnic groups mix together well; in addition, partnerships with other schools, both in this country and abroad, help students to understand very effectively the lives of students in situations that are very different from their own. The school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities is evident and has a clear impact on outcomes: there are no clear differences between the progress made by students from different groups.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who contributed their views to the inspection team through the parental questionnaire was average. A very large majority of replies indicate positive views of the school, including those on behaviour. The views of parents and carers were useful to the inspection team in coming to outstanding judgements for students' safety and the extent to which they adopt healthy lifestyles.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Radclyffe 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 325 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,340 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	137	42	166	51	8	2	7	2
The school keeps my child safe	133	41	169	52	2	1	6	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	158	49	149	46	6	2	6	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	136	42	165	51	11	3	9	3
The teaching is good at this school	127	39	174	54	9	3	5	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	109	34	166	51	23	7	8	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	26	188	58	20	6	6	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)	121	37	162	50	9	3	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	111	34	180	55	17	5	6	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	133	41	152	47	26	8	8	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	92	28	184	57	29	9	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	130	40	158	49	14	4	7	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	169	52	133	41	7	2	6	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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 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.



26 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Radclyffe School, Oldham, OL9 0LS

You will remember that a team of inspectors and I recently inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and took note of the views that you expressed.

We judged that The Radclyffe School is a good school, where you achieve well. Because the school gives you such outstanding care, guidance and support, teachers and other staff are helping to raise your aspirations very effectively. Good teaching means that you progress well in lessons and during your time at school. You make good progress and enjoy learning especially when you are actively engaged, such as in paired work or well-focused sorting activities. The excellent curriculum on offer is also helping you to achieve better examination results.

You show an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and told us that bullying is rare. You also show an excellent knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. You enjoy sport and dance, and many of you participate in additional activities, such as trampolining. Behaviour is good overall; you respond well to adult supervision and direction, whether in lessons or around the school.

Within a very positive picture, we have identified three areas where the school can improve. Accordingly, we have asked the headteacher, governors and staff to:

- raise attainment in English and mathematics
- increase the proportion of you gaining GCSE passes at the highest grades through providing more consistent challenge in lessons
- improve attendance and punctuality.

You can play your part in making The Radclyffe a better school. Concentrate hard in all your lessons, particularly in English and mathematics, and ensure that you attend school as much as you possibly can. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Chambers
Her Majesty's Inspector

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