



Pensby High School for Boys: A Specialist Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number	105100
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	336425
Inspection dates	30 September 2009–1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Patrick Geraghty 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	607
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Rowe
Headteacher	Mr Phil Sheridan
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Irby Road Heswall, Wirral Merseyside CH61 6XN
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Age group 11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 39 lessons and held meetings with staff, groups of students and governors. They observed the school's work, and documentation was scrutinised including information which tracks the academic and personal progress of students, detailed analysis of students' attainment and progress, school development planning, school and subject self-evaluation, records of recent classroom monitoring, minutes from meetings of the governing body and evidence to demonstrate how the school supports students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Inspectors also examined evaluations undertaken by the school to ensure that it meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. In addition, 175 parental questionnaires were scrutinised along with questionnaires returned by a representative sample of pupils and staff.

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

- students' attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics, to determine the effectiveness of strategies used to improve outcomes
- if teaching and learning were sufficiently challenging to promote better outcomes for students
- the impact of curriculum development, including the contribution of the specialist subject, on increasing engagement and improving students' outcomes
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers at all levels to drive improvement
- how well the curriculum meets the needs and interests of all students
- how effectively the leadership team tackle any underperformance.

Information about the School

Pensby High School for Boys is a smaller than average secondary school. The number of pupils who claim free school meals is slightly above the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average although the proportion who have a statement to support their special educational need is slightly above. The percentage of pupils other than White British is 4.1%. The school draws from ten wards with the majority coming from average and above social and economic backgrounds and approximately 10% are from disadvantaged areas. The intake reflects an average academic mix but with fewer pupils at the higher end of academic achievement. There is a joint sixth form with Pensby High School for Girls. The school is a specialist sports college.

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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?

3

The schools capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. A legacy of underperformance at Key Stage 4 is being effectively tackled. The introduction of robust tracking and monitoring systems to identify students' progress, and astute new appointments to key positions in English and mathematics, have re-focused the school. Students are benefiting from the closer monitoring that ensures they make better progress. Data are used effectively and challenging targets are now set. Standards, particularly in English and mathematics, have risen because of a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and the effective use of targeted strategies. The level of students' work examined by inspectors was at least satisfactory and often good. Early entry GCSE English and GCSE modular test results in mathematics and science indicate further improvement in performance in these subjects. The school recognises the need to further raise standards at Key Stage 4. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While there is much good teaching there remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across subject areas. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching across the curriculum.

School leaders ensure that the Every Child Matters' outcomes are central to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Students enjoy school. Behaviour in lessons and around the site are good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good. The curriculum matches students' needs. The sport specialism makes a positive contribution to curriculum enrichment by promoting a strong programme of extra-curricular activity, advancing an excellent approach to healthy lifestyles, and as one of the drivers of improvement throughout the school. Care, guidance and support are good with a strong focus on those most vulnerable and at risk of not achieving to their potential. Younger students in the lower school benefit from the guidance and support of a team of sixth formers, who act as peer mentors. The school recognises the need to integrate the role of form tutors into the monitoring and tracking of students' progress to enhance the successful work done by many subject managers and teachers.

There is effective leadership by the headteacher and deputy head. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is aware of where further improvements need to be made. There remain some inconsistencies at both senior management and middle management level in the quality of monitoring and planning for improvement. Equality of opportunities for all are promoted satisfactorily. Governors have successfully improved the school's financial position but acknowledge that they now need to focus more on monitoring progress set against challenging targets. The

school provides satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise attainment at Key Stage 4 so that outcomes for five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics are in line with the national average in 2010 and above in 2011.
- To share good practice across the curriculum so that inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are tackled and all students have the opportunity to engage in consistently challenging learning.
- To integrate into the care and support systems the tracking and monitoring of student progress so that form tutors can more fully support the embedded systems in use by subject managers and teachers.
- To tackle remaining inconsistencies at senior and middle management level in the planning, monitoring, evaluation and action planning for improvement so that all aspects of provision are at least good.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' progress in lessons is satisfactory and improving. A legacy of underperformance at Key Stage 4 is being robustly tackled. Performance against key national indicators has improved significantly. The proportion of students attaining five GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics has risen by 13 percentage points over the last year. The increase in outcomes at five GCSE A* to C grades has increased over two years by 18 percentage points and is now broadly in line with national averages. In particular, attainment has improved in English and mathematics. The level of student work examined in Years 10 and 11 by inspectors was at least satisfactory. In lessons visited, inspectors judged that students made at least satisfactory progress. For present Year 11 students modules already taken in Year 10 indicate a marked improvement in performance in English and mathematics. The school's systematic tracking of students' progress demonstrates that it is on course to meet the challenging targets it has set for 2010. Work and activities instigated by National Challenge status has been a major spur to a more focused approach to intervention to tackle underperformance. Good and better lessons were observed in English, mathematics, drama, physical education, food technology, design technology, business studies, art and ICT. However, within this picture of improvement, inconsistencies remain in the rates of progress made between different subjects. School leaders are acutely aware of

these variations and have instigated strategies to accelerate progress. The progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good.

Students enjoy school, feel safe and treat each other and adults with mutual respect and dignity. Behaviour is good and there are few incidents of bullying. Good behaviour maintains learning when teaching sometimes lacks pace, imaginative planning and challenge. Students praise the many opportunities they have to discuss any difficulties. Older students take good care of younger ones. Virtually all have adopted healthy lifestyles with over 90% taking part in regular sports activities and team games. The vast majority choose healthy food options and popular fruit dispensing machines have replaced those offering fizzy drinks. They respond enthusiastically to the health promotion strategies, many of which involve their whole family. Students take part in numerous activities beyond lessons. Sixth formers run clubs and act as mentors to younger boys. Year 10 sports leaders lead clubs in primary schools. The school council is valued and has contributed to decision making including the refurbishment of the canteen and the strong focus on healthy food. Students gain good leadership and team building skills from numerous enterprise activities. Attendance is average. Students gain a good idea of the next step needed for success. A legacy of underperformance in the development of literacy and numeracy skills is being tackled. Figures indicate that the number leaving school that are not in education, training or employment is low and well below the area average. A strength of the school is the good moral and social development of the boys, through well focused religious education lessons, assemblies and community activities. The school recognises the need to more fully prepare students for life within the wider British community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

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

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?

Teaching is satisfactory with a number of good aspects. The best lessons are well planned and develop good communication skills. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and engage students with interesting, imaginative and developmental activities. Teachers use praise and questioning to encourage students' ideas and set aspirations for them. There are many opportunities for peer assessment. Teaching sustains interest and motivation. Positive relationships lead to good attitudes to learning. Consistently good and challenging teaching was observed in English. There remain significant inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across subjects. In satisfactory lessons, outcomes are not clear and too often these lessons are teacher-led and lack pace, excitement and new learning. The opportunities for students to engage in independent learning activities are limited. There is insufficient sharing of the good practice across the curriculum.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all students. A broad range of GCSEs and BTEC First Diplomas have been developed with attractive options' booklets to inform students of the choices they can make. The school has made much effort to provide a personalised curriculum choice. Students in Years 8 and 9 study two languages which adds greatly to their understanding of different cultures. The specialism in sport has impacted on other curriculum areas. An impressive and popular range of sporting extra-curricular activities have an outstanding impact on students' commitment to healthy lifestyles. Adaptations to the curriculum at Key Stage 4 have increased opportunities for students and collaboration with other providers has established suitable progression routes for students aged 14 to 19.

The school has established good relationships with local primary schools. Transition arrangements are good and include well organised induction days. Transition between key stages is strong and ensures that choices are appropriate. Looked after children are well cared for as are pupils with specific needs. Good links with outside agencies enhance the good care and support offered. The school recognises the need to expand the role of the form tutor so that they have a greater involvement in the tracking and monitoring of students' progress and enhanced links with curriculum managers and teachers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy head lead the school effectively and are the drivers of its developing improvement agenda. For several years, the school has underperformed at Key Stage 4. A renewed focus and emphasis on raising achievement and standards is now having an impact. Robust systems to track and monitor student progress have been introduced. Potential underachievement is now rapidly identified. Carefully considered and realistic target setting ensures that the effective use of data guides leaders' challenging targets. Staffing changes over two years have led to the appointment of highly capable leaders in English and mathematics and a number of talented and innovative teachers. Consequently, results in 2009 demonstrated significant improvement. A group of middle leaders have established secure mechanisms by which to share good practice. They are clear about their role in securing further improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and self-critical. There remain some inconsistencies, recognised by the school, at both senior and middle management level in the quality of planning, monitoring, evaluation and action planning for improvement. The quality of teaching and learning are monitored effectively. However, not all staff are as yet fully committed to the sharing of good practice and engaging in appropriate strategies to promote further improvement.

Opportunities are provided through the curriculum for students to appreciate their place within the global community although initiatives to understand the wider British community are currently underdeveloped. Partnerships are good, well promoted and enhanced by sports college status. Links with external providers add to the students' learning. There is effective promotion of equality of opportunity through pastoral programmes, the developing curriculum and an increasing range of additional activities. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. While there has been strong encouragement of community cohesion within the school the evaluation of its promotion beyond the school is at an early stage. Governance is satisfactory. Governors recognise the need to be more involved within the school and to develop a more critical and evaluative approach to monitoring its progress. Governors have worked successfully to improve the financial position of the school. All safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are reviewed as part of a rolling programme of checks. The school has a satisfactory and improving capacity to achieve further improvements.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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

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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	3

Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Results in 2009 improved with several subjects gaining 100% pass rate. However, there remain a number of underperforming areas on level 3 courses. Level 2 results have improved and there is now a developing pattern of increased progression between levels. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory with enough good teaching to further promote improvement. Pastoral care, support and guidance are developing strengths and are good. Students feel confident in their teachers and relationships are good. Sixth formers play a positive role in mentoring in the 11 to 16 school. Career and progression guidance is effective. New leadership of the sixth form has identified clear areas for improvement. The leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory. Managers demonstrate a clear understanding of the sixth form's strengths and weaknesses. The tracking and monitoring of student progress has improved.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

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Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received questionnaire responses from approximately 175 parents and carers. Analysis of responses indicates that the vast majority are happy with their child's experience at school and that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that their child is well prepared for the future. Parents and carers were also positive about the quality of teaching. Few parents made negative comments. Of those, the main concern was about bullying. Inspectors are satisfied that the school deals effectively with incidences of bullying that occur.

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Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pensby High School for Boys: A Specialist Sports 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 175 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 607 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	56	90	35	14	6	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	106	42	138	54	7	3	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	107	42	123	49	16	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	88	35	129	52	21	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	94	37	129	51	19	8	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	32	138	55	21	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	30	138	56	27	11	0	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)	103	43	109	45	13	5	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	40	89	44	19	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	90	37	121	49	25	10	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	80	32	138	55	19	8	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	107	43	114	46	13	5	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	49	108	43	13	5	3	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 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.

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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. <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

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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.

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Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome that you gave my colleagues and I when we inspected your school this week. We would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with us. We would also like to commend you for your good behaviour.

The reason we came to your school was to find out what was going well and what could be improved. Here is what we found:

- Pensby High School for Boys is a satisfactory school and some of the outcomes for you and the provision the school makes are good
- your attainment and progress is satisfactory and improving and the school is aiming for this to become good
- the way you are taught and the way that you learn is satisfactory
- your behaviour is good and you get on very well as a community.

The leaders in your school worked with us to decide on some ways in which the pursuit of good and better provision could become a reality. We decided that to achieve this, the school should:

- raise attainment at Key Stage 4 so that outcomes for GCSE five A* to C grades including English and mathematics are above the national average by 2011
- share the good practice in teaching and learning across all subjects so that you all have the opportunity to engage in consistently challenging learning

- add into the care and support systems the tracking and monitoring of your progress so that form tutors can more fully appreciate and support your improvement and help you if you fall behind
- improve some aspects of how senior and middle managers plan and evaluate ways to make your provision better.

You can help your school to improve further by ensuring everyone focuses on the pursuit of excellence for all of you and trying hard in your studies so that you can achieve your full potential in life.

I wish you the very best for the future.

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