

Finham Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103738
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355446
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh 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	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1502
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Burns
Headteacher	Mark Bailie
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2008
School address	Green Lane Coventry CV3 6EA
Telephone number	024 76418135
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 44 teachers and visited 45 lessons. They held meetings with senior leaders, groups of students, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, students' work, policies and school documents. The inspection team received 232 completed questionnaires from parents or carers and scrutinised questionnaires completed by students.

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

- How well have leaders, at all levels, ensured rigour with evaluations to bring about improvements?
- How good is the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school?
- How effective has the leadership in the sixth form been in reducing the variation in performance of different subjects?
- How effective is the school's engagement with parents and carers?

Information about the school

Finham Park is a large community school with a large sixth form. In 2003, the school became a specialist mathematics and computing college. It is also a training school. About one quarter of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than average. Of these, the large majority are of Indian heritage. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained a number of awards: Investors in People, 'Confucius Classroom' status, International Schools Award, Artsmark, Eco-Schools (Silver), Healthy Schools status, Specialist Schools and Academies Trust Consultant School status and is a Hub School for mathematics and computing. The school is part of the South West Federation in Coventry which makes joint post-16 provision.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Finham Park has moved from being a good school to an outstanding school. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the school has a very strong sense of vision and direction based on getting the best from each individual and putting students voice at the heart of all it does. The school provides students with many opportunities which enable them to achieve very well and, equally importantly, to enjoy their learning and time at the school. Students' responses to questionnaires and when talking to inspectors show they are fully behind the school and are overwhelmingly enthusiastic. This is a happy and harmonious school where diversity is celebrated.

The school provides an innovative and exciting curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support for students. This ensures that students' learning and progress and their personal development, including their behaviour, attendance and their contribution to the wider community are outstanding. Students are confident, friendly and articulate. Large numbers of students willingly volunteer to take up positions of responsibility and leadership, and they take full advantage of the rich programme of extra-curricular activities in the arts, sports and cultural areas. Overall, teaching is good and often outstanding. Relationships are excellent and there are high expectations from teachers. Lessons are well planned with a range of tasks or materials targeted at specific groups. Teachers share their expertise and ideas on a regular basis. All this leads to outstanding achievement and attainment which is consistently well above the national average. The specialist mathematics and computing status has contributed significantly to improving aspects of the school's provision. It makes an impressive contribution to raising attainment and achievement. The specialism has a high profile across the school and provides innovation through cross-curricular projects between science and mathematics called 'Discovery and Invention'.

The sixth form provides a good quality of education, and students are provided with many opportunities for excellent personal development. A number of new initiatives have been implemented with the aim of reducing the variation of performance across different subjects. However, these changes are too recent to show through in terms of impact.

Most parents and carers feel that the school is well led and managed and they are happy with their child's experience of school. They have the opportunity to use the schools' online system to monitor their child's attendance and progress. Positive

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comments recorded by parents included: 'I think the vertical grouped mentor system is a fantastic idea. My daughter feels she has made friends in all year groups.' A minority of parents and carers feel that the school could do more to help them to support their child's learning and expressed some reservations about parent consultation evenings. Senior leaders have already identified parental engagement as an area for action in their school improvement plan.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, senior leaders, the governing body and staff have worked creatively and with passion to improve provision and outcomes for students. There is excellent teamwork across the school which ensures that the school's ethos is consistently promoted. The school has an accurate assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and is self-critical. Robust monitoring and tracking of student progress has led to improvement in GCSE performance and, in 2010, the school obtained its best ever results. This, and the many other improvements since the last inspection, demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the newly implemented procedures in the sixth form are monitored and evaluated so that they reduce the variation in progress between different subjects.
- Improve engagement with parents and carers by:
 - providing tailored guidance and information about precise ways parents and carers can support their child's learning across a wide range of subjects
 - carrying out a review of the current arrangements for parent consultation evenings.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The attainment of students shows an improving trend. Attainment on entry to the school is above average and based on their starting points students make outstanding progress. Results for 2010 indicate a marked improvement to 90% in the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C. The proportion of A* to C grades including English and mathematics has been well above the national average for the last three years. Boys in 2010 performed well and closed the gaps in performance with girls. All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Those from other specific groups, such as minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly from an Indian heritage, perform at least as well as their peers. In lessons, students show very positive attitudes to learning.

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They listen well, collaborate and discuss issues sensibly in groups, pairs or as a whole class. They settle to work promptly and most want to do well. Students show creativity and work exceptionally well independently.

Students feel safe and well cared for. Younger students expressed their confidence in being able to seek help from older students in leadership positions and within the vertical tutoring system. Students' behaviour around the school and in lessons is excellent. They are helpful and thoughtful to each other. At lunchtime, the self-management of students in queues and in the relatively small dining area is exemplary. Students know a great deal about how to be healthy and an increasing number are eating a healthy school meal. The take-up of sports is exceptional and students greatly enjoy the variety of opportunities offered. Attendance is high. Students value their school and make a significant contribution to the school and broader community, for example, as sports leaders, community ambassadors and through the 'Baraza' which involves students in an open forum discussion about the school. International student leaders have travelled to a partner school in Shanghai, and planned and delivered an arts festival. Students' high personal and academic achievement, their ability to work independently, their civic skills and behaviour, all prepare them well for the future. They benefit from a wealth of opportunities to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly through student leadership activities and the International Schools Award.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

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

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Lessons are well planned, with focused learning outcomes and a range of progressive learning tasks with attractive and relevant resources. Teachers are enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge. Relationships between teacher and students are excellent. This creates a positive learning environment with mutual respect and a common purpose. Teachers use their knowledge of students to match tasks based on the students' ability and, therefore, they are not always doing the same work. The starts of lessons are very effective in motivating and engaging students and to review and reinforce prior learning. Students respond well to the challenge of lessons. Information and communication technology is used effectively to give instructions, and provide stimulating visual materials. Teachers skilfully employ strategies for them to get feedback on what has been learned and for students to check their own and each other's progress. However, written work is not always consistently checked and marked on a regular basis.

An imaginative, and motivational curriculum is matched exceptionally well to the wide range of individual needs and supports outstanding achievement. In Year 7, an integrated humanities course is both skills and student centred. In Year 8, students have a circus of enrichment modules which include media, business and enterprise, and Mandarin. Personalised programmes of study for students experiencing barriers to learning have been set up by providing practical courses and working in partnership with the local college. Gifted and talented students have the opportunity to learn geography taught in French and there are courses in additional mathematics.

The school is very inclusive in its philosophy. Vertical tutoring which mixes students of all ages together provides a strong basis for the excellent support and care students receive. Excellent support for those students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is provided mainly through the personalised learning centre. One to one support is provided by a dedicated team of staff, so students are motivated to improve. There are close links with external agencies to support the welfare of students. Students have confidence in the school to advise them on the next steps they need to take for their future.

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?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership in driving forward improvement

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and provides challenge and rigour to the work the school. He is supported exceptionally well by senior leaders who have established comprehensive systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school. The commitment and morale of staff is very high. Target setting is challenging and the school meets its targets. Highly effective middle leaders have been successful in devising strategies to improve outcomes in their subject areas. Clear lines of accountability ensure they play a key role in monitoring and evaluating their subjects. As a result, the school has an accurate and informed view on the quality of teaching and the training school status underpins its strong focus on teaching and learning. A rich and varied continual professional development is highly effective in improving aspects of teaching.

The governing body knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and discharges its statutory duties well. Students are kept safe by good safeguarding practice which more than complies with national requirements. Partnerships with external agencies, schools and business are very strong and bring many benefits to the school and students. Student learning ambassadors are trained to observe lessons and have visited and observed lessons in other schools. International partnerships with Nepal and China have provided enrichment to the curriculum and student learning. Equality of opportunity is central to the school's aims and all groups of students achieve well. The school undertakes a rigorous analysis of the performance of different groups to overcome any variations. The school has taken forward its work on promoting community cohesion well. There is good evidence of its work in the local community and beyond but the governing body has not fully evaluated its impact.

These are the grades for 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	1
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	1
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	1

Sixth form

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Students make good progress during their time in the sixth form and develop in maturity and confidence. Attainment in the International Baccalaureate is high and above average at A level. A large majority of students progress to higher education. All Year 12 participate in a broad extra-curricular programme and benefit significantly. This includes, additional courses, peer mentoring and the Duke of Edinburgh award. Over half are involved in leadership schemes. Students play a key role in other aspects of school life, in part through the vertical mentoring system. Thus, personal development is outstanding.

The teaching seen during the inspection was at least good overall and much was outstanding. Students debate and discuss with confidence, and they work independently. The curriculum offers a wide range of some 30 Level 3 courses. A few additional subjects are available at other schools within the federation. The school is a national leader of the International Baccalaureate which is very well established and successful, and now recruiting significantly from outside the school. Care, guidance and support has some good features, including the quick identification of, and support for, vulnerable students. There is good guidance for higher education and strenuous efforts to provide programmes that suit individual needs. There are excellent facilities, including the Internet Café. There have been some recent initiatives such as new mechanisms to track student progress which have yet to be fully embedded in the work of the sixth form.

The sixth form is managed well through shared leadership amongst senior leaders. Recent identification of underperforming subjects has led to suitable measures being put in place to remedy the variance amongst subjects.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The percentage of questionnaires returned was low. Most parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe, the school is well led and managed and they are happy with their child's experience of school. A minority of parents and carers feel the school does not take account of their suggestions and views. Comments made by parents and carers raised concerns about the new uniform and healthy eating. Inspectors investigated these thoroughly through discussion with students and senior leaders. Inspectors found that the school canteen provides healthy choices at lunchtimes. The school has just finished its consultation on the new uniform and this included a fashion show for parents and carers. Outcomes of the consultation are in the process of being circulated.

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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 Finham Park 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 232 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1495 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	37	136	59	10	4	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	76	33	146	63	6	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	76	33	136	59	15	6	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	29	145	63	12	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	27	153	66	7	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	18	154	66	31	13	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	14	154	66	35	15	5	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)	57	25	149	64	11	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	22	153	66	14	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	20	154	66	19	8	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	10	148	64	31	13	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	62	27	151	65	6	3	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	35	137	59	7	3	0	0

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

10 December 2010

Dear Students



Inspection of Finham Park School, Coventry, CV3 6EA

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you, and you helped us to find out about the school. The headteacher has led the school through some significant improvements in attendance, behaviour, curriculum and its best ever GCSE examination results. The school provides you with an outstanding quality of education and the sixth form is good. Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You enjoy school, feel safe and your behaviour and attendance are first-rate.
- Your achievement in GCSE examinations is excellent.
- The quality of care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding, the school supports you very well individually and vertical tutoring helps to provide a community where you get on well with each other.
- The curriculum provides you with many opportunities and memorable experiences.
- There are many outstanding partnerships with local schools, external agencies, and schools in other countries, which have benefitted you and provided you with some exciting projects.
- You play a key role in your school and the numbers of leadership roles you undertake is very impressive.
- The teaching is good.
- The school's specialist status in mathematics and computing makes a strong contribution to the work of the school.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements.

- Ensure that the new ideas introduced in the sixth form are monitored and evaluated so that they reduce the variation in progress between different subjects.
- Improve some of the ways the school engages with your parents and carers.

We wish you all the very best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh
Her Majesty's Inspector

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