

Carisbrooke High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118214
Local Authority	Isle of Wight
Inspection number	312851
Inspection dates	22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Jones (HMI)

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

Type of School	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13-19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1336
Sixth form	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steve Howe
Headteacher	Ms Mary Hoather
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Mountbatten Drive Newport PO30 5QU
Telephone number	01983 524651
Fax number	01983 825456

Age group	13-19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. During a one-day visit, the inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards in the sixth form; suitability of curriculum provision to meet the needs of all learners; support and guidance for vulnerable students and how well they achieve.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; nationally published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; curriculum and planning documents; observation of the school at work; interviews with staff, governors and students and scrutiny of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Carisbrooke High School is larger than other schools. Few students come from minority ethnic groups or have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly speech, language and communication difficulties as well as behavioural, emotional and social problems is similar to that found in other schools although higher than average numbers of students have a statement of special educational needs. An autistic spectrum resource centre (ASRC) is based in the school. The school has been designated as a sports specialist college since 2001 and has enhanced healthy schools status. In July 2007, Carisbrooke received the International School Award.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'Carisbrooke is a great school both academically and in terms of valuing the whole child.' This quote from a parent encapsulates the outcomes of this inspection.

Carisbrooke High School is a good school where students and staff are well cared for and know the importance of their community. The school provides a good quality of education that is improving rapidly and student achievement is rising. This is due to outstanding leadership and management introducing effective recent change through identifying and prioritising key areas, such as improving learning. Students join the school in Year 9 with just below average levels of attainment and they leave Year 11 with good GCSE results, representing good progress from their starting points. Standards are improving rapidly. In 2007, 58% of students gained five or more GCSEs at A* to C, just below the national average. Information provided by the school indicates that this improved significantly in 2008 to 69% and was above the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs including English and mathematics was in line with national averages in 2008. The local authority recently implemented a 2 year Key Stage 3 curriculum and many students take the national Key Stage 3 tests in their middle schools. Consequently, students may start GCSE courses in Year 9 as soon as they enter Carisbrooke High School. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those attached to the ASRC, and those who are vulnerable receive good quality guidance and support. This is improving their achievement and the progress they make is at least as good as their peers.

Students make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Teachers are expert and enthusiastic in their subject areas. They reflect on the impact of their classroom practices and focus strongly on improving the learning experiences of their students, particularly through creating a stimulating learning environment. Students learn well when teachers encourage them to think for themselves and they thrive on a variety of activities that capture and keep their interest. They learn less well when teachers talk too much and provide them with limited opportunities to be involved in their own learning. Students are aware of their current and target attainment levels. They are less clear on exactly what more they have to do to improve as the marking and feedback they receive on their work does not always give them enough useful and positive guidance.

Parents are pleased with the 'good quality and standard of the school'. As one commented, 'The school has had a positive effect on my child's maturity both educationally and emotionally.' This reflects the outstanding personal development and well-being of students. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also outstanding. They are very aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and understand what constitutes a healthy diet as well as the importance of physical activity. Students enjoy very happy relationships with their peers and confirm that they feel very safe, reporting that any bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively. Some parents expressed concerns about standards of behaviour in school but students themselves are certain that this is not an issue. They behave well; enjoy school very much and attend regularly. Students are very appreciative of the opportunities available to them at school and want to take on responsibilities that contribute to the school community, to work hard and do well in their studies.

The outstanding curriculum provides a wide and diverse range of learning opportunities and courses both in school and in collaboration with other providers. Students appreciate these opportunities and are clear that coming to school is now 'more enjoyable'. One student said, 'I like coming to school now as I can do things that interest me.' The school's sports specialist status is having significant impact on the curriculum through modelling an excellent set of curriculum pathways that include GCSE, BTEC and vocational courses and ensuring students have the opportunity to follow personalised learning programmes. As a result, the specialist school status permeates all areas of the school and has a significant impact on teaching. This wide-ranging vocational provision, coupled with strong personal and social education, prepares students very well for future adulthood and gives them an excellent understanding of a wide range of social and economic issues. The school offers an excellent range of extra curricular activities that are closely linked to students' interests and are much appreciated, particularly the sporting activities. Well-established links with a range of other countries through teacher and student exchanges enhance students' awareness of other cultures.

The school successfully places a strong emphasis on pastoral care. Students' experiencing difficulties, or at risk of underachieving, are identified and supported through effective work with individual students, and their parents.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are vulnerable are particularly well looked after and supported. One carer of a child with specific learning difficulties felt they had 'steadfastly matured and grown in confidence'. Good systems are in place to record students' academic achievement giving staff the background they need to plan future learning and to give students guidance on their performance. Not all staff are as yet using this information consistently and regularly to fully inform students how they might improve the quality of their work. Health and safety, and child protection procedures are firmly in place and excellent contact between the school and partner support agencies adds significantly to the breadth of students' learning experiences.

The headteacher has a clear vision for moving the school forward that is focused strongly on improving learning. Parents are aware of recent improvements, as one commented, 'the school has radically improved over the last 3 years and learning is now an active and exciting process'. Governors are fully involved and committed to the life of the school and managers and leaders at all levels are empowered to take greater responsibility for the quality of education within their areas. Many are taking a creative approach to this opportunity and standards are improving significantly. Outstanding leadership and management have created excellent capacity for continuous improvement based on a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and a very clear view of how they would wish to improve.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students make good progress from their starting points on entry to the sixth form. Information provided by the school indicates that standards in 2008 are overall in line with the national average and improving. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students are mature, responsible young people. They are keen to take on a range of responsibilities both in school and in the wider community, resulting in a strong sense of their own identity in the school. For example, they organise and host an 'Intergeneration Day' for a large number of local older people as well as leading whole-school fundraising charity days. Sports leaders are active in leading training for the local 'Special Olympics'. The student council is very dynamic and student representatives are members of the school's governing body and attend full meetings.

Sixth form teaching is good and takes place in an atmosphere of respect and trust that encourages learning. The outstanding curriculum offers a wide variety of courses that meets the needs and interests of the maximum number of students. Curriculum provision is enhanced and extended through the collaborative arrangements with other local providers and the vocational pathways linked to the school's specialist status. Students receive excellent guidance and support through the 'personal progress tutoring' system that provides individual academic monitoring and support. Good leadership and management of the sixth form are focused clearly on giving the students academic guidance as well as developing their individual talents and interests. Students appreciate the approachability of staff and feel the school takes very good care of them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure feedback and marking gives clear guidance to all students on the standard of their work and what they need to do to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

² IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

06 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Carisbrooke High School, Newport, PO30 5QU

After our visit to Carisbrooke High, we would like to share our findings with you and thank you for your friendly welcome and for taking time to talk to us. You tell us that the school is 'great' and we agree with you. Carisbrooke High is a good school and you all make good progress in your exams. We are very pleased that you all enjoy school so much and make the most of the wide opportunities available to you through the excellent curriculum. You are very appreciative of not only the good teaching but also the sporting opportunities, music, and wide range of clubs.

The school takes very good care of you. You tell us that you feel very safe and that there is always someone to turn to when you need help. You speak highly of your teachers' readiness to assist you. The leadership of your school is excellent and works hard to make sure you all reach your potential and learn as well as you can.

Because you cooperate so well, with what your school is trying to do for you, we are convinced that you will continue to support your teachers' efforts and go from strength to strength in developing your personal skills as well as your academic prowess. To help you with this we have asked your teachers to give you more information and guidance on the best ways to improve your work and make it easier for you to reach your targets.

We wish you and your school a very successful future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

