

Huddersfield Grammar School

Independent school light-touch inspection report

DfE registration number	382/6005
Unique Reference Number (URN)	107786
Inspection number	364233
Inspection dates	04 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Blake HMI

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 090071

© Crown copyright 2011



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

This was a light touch educational inspection, which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Huddersfield Grammar School is a selective mixed day school with pupils from three to 16 years of age. The school, which is part of the Cognita group of schools, opened in 1995 and currently has 427 pupils on roll. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage with 43 children from three to five years of age, all of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding. The overwhelming majority of pupils travel from areas fairly local to the school and represent a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds, although the vast majority are of White British heritage. No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The school aims to 'offer a supportive and nurturing environment where pupils feel secure and are set challenges, which enable them to meet or exceed expectations' and 'to strive towards individual academic success by encouraging self-discipline through a diverse curriculum that challenges pupils and develops enquiring minds.' The school was previously inspected in February, 2008.

Evaluation of the school

Huddersfield Grammar School is providing a good quality of education for its pupils and meets fully its published aims. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, and very effectively supports the children so they make good overall progress in their learning. The pupils make good progress in both their formal learning and in their all-round personal development. The quality of teaching is consistently good, which helps the pupils to enjoy school and achieve personal success in both their academic work and in a number of school-related activities. The school provides a safe and secure learning environment for its pupils, and meets all regulations for safeguarding its pupils. The school has successfully maintained and developed further the good quality outcomes and provision it achieved in its previous inspection. The school meets all the regulations for independent schools.

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

Quality of education

The quality of the curriculum is good in both the main school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school's curriculum policy is brief, but combined with the curricular information in the school prospectus provides parents and carers with a clear overview of what is taught at the school, from the Early Years Foundation Stage up to Year 11. There is a good range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, which help promote pupils' learning and the good rate of progress that they make during their entire time at the school. The take-up from pupils to the range of extra-curricular activities on offer is very good. Although the school does not teach any design and technology, the remaining curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and gives an appropriate emphasis to the provision of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Time allocations are suitable for the range of subjects taught. The schemes of work are more detailed and secure in literacy and numeracy than in other subjects at whole-school level.

The quality and effectiveness of teaching is good across the school, with assessment procedures and practices of a satisfactory standard. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well in lessons. The quality of planning is always satisfactory or better at lesson level, where teachers plan effectively to teach a range of activities that reflect the needs of their pupils. At its best, teachers know exactly what progress can be expected in the pupils' learning because they have identified specific outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding. Occasionally, however, some content fails to extend the range of learning skills and personal attributes more suitable for higher attaining pupils; in particular, developing some aspects of their independent learning. Some of the teachers' planning for different ability groups in lessons concentrates on doing more of the same rather than extending the range of different learning skills that would challenge all the pupils to become more independent learners. The working relationships between staff and pupils are excellent in all lessons because of the effective management and organisation of learning, and the caring and sensitive way in which staff treat the pupils. For example, the strategy to divide some class groups into two, and provide some additional adult support, works well and ensures that those pupils who require focused support are well catered for.

The school is collecting a range of information about pupil progress across the school but it has only recently started to gather regular information against the National Curriculum levels in Year 7 only. This strategy is yet to be rolled out across all year groups in all subjects. Assessment procedures are strongest in Key Stage 4 because of the range of accredited courses that the students study for GCSE. Teachers' marking is consistently carried out and generally contains a suitable balance of praise and reinforcement for the pupils' efforts and learning. Occasionally, however, there is too little written comment in books about the quality of work produced and how it can be improved further.

The standards achieved range from average to high in the subjects taught. The pupils start in Year 1 with above average standards and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11 have achieved a number of good or excellent grades in their GCSE examinations; this includes pupils of all abilities. Overall, therefore pupils' progress is good, which was confirmed by inspectors in those lessons seen.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils are satisfactory. The school provides a structured and well-organised learning environment, within which pupils are developing a strong sense of their moral and social qualities. The pupils are articulate and confident, but too much teacher direction in lessons, combined with a lack of whole-school curricular provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE), limits the extent to which the pupils are developing all aspects of their self-knowledge, self-confidence and self-esteem. The behaviour seen throughout the school is good. Although this means that the pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong, there are limitations in them taking individual responsibility for some aspects of their learning, and being more actively involved in aspects of decision-making within the school. Despite this, the overwhelming majority are extremely positive about attending the school, with the attendance rate high.

Pupils feel safe, and those who spoke with inspectors were confident that they know who to talk to if the need arises; for example, in the event of a bullying incident. Although there is a school council to which the pupils can contribute ideas, a significant number responding in the inspection questionnaire felt that the school did not take sufficient account of their views. There are some opportunities for the younger pupils to experience some of the 'public services', which they encounter outside of school. However, there are fewer opportunities for the older students to build upon these experiences in a context which reflects their age and maturity because of a limited curricular provision in the relevant areas of citizenship and PSHE. In contrast to this, the school's provision for helping the pupils to gain an appreciation for, and an understanding of, different cultures is good. A range of world faiths is celebrated in assemblies and the school makes good use of its varied ethnic mix to celebrate aspects of different cultures; for example, the Chinese New Year. The very strong emphasis on acquiring key skills, knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy, together with a striving for academic success means that the pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Procedures for safeguarding the pupils, including the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, are well known and followed by all adults who work in the school. Overall, the school's measures to promote the welfare, health and safety of its pupils, including for child protection, are good. The school has a single central

register, which meets all requirements because it has comprehensive details about all adults who work in, or visit the school on a regular basis. The quality of supervision in lessons and when the pupils are moving about the school is very effective. There are excellent working relationships between teachers and pupils and clear expectations of behaviour ensure that the pupils are sensible in and around school. The school actively promotes healthy living, particularly through its approach to the pupils' involvement in extra-curricular sport and regular physical education. However, a significant number of parents and pupils responding in the inspection questionnaire, and directly from discussions with pupils during the inspection, raised concerns about the quality and quantity of school meals; in particular, about their suitability for vegetarians and, more generally, in encouraging them to eat healthily. Fire safety checks comply fully with the regulations. Although the school meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, its three-year accessibility plan although satisfactory overall, is limited in relation to how it will make its curriculum, resources and information more accessible to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality and overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the provision are good. The children are achieving good outcomes so that by the time they leave this setting and start at the main school in Year 1, they are well above average in all areas of learning. This achievement is the result of excellent attendance and very positive attitudes to work; all of which help the children to thoroughly enjoy their time at the school. The children understand very well how to keep safe, and the good development of personal and social skills, including simple hygiene activities of washing their hands before eating, enable them to develop a good range of personal qualities that will serve them well during the next stage of their education.

Staff are highly qualified, and use their expertise well to make the learning experiences of the children both beneficial and enjoyable. The quality of teaching is good and is characterised by good quality support for the children's learning and personal needs. However, the current system for baseline assessment when the children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage is insufficiently precise across all the areas of learning, which means that the school cannot always measure as accurately as it should the progress made by the children when they have completed the end of Early Years Foundation Stage profile. The curriculum is good, with indoor space used well. However, the reception children have limited regular access to an outdoor play space. Senior leaders are aware of this and have advanced plans to address this issue. The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a clear vision for further improvements and policies and procedures with regard to safeguarding are securely in place.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- develop curricular planning at whole-school level and in all subject areas in order to ensure greater continuity and progression in the pupils' learning
- develop assessment strategies in all subjects across all year groups so that teachers plan their lessons with a greater knowledge of the pupils' prior attainment
- develop the school's PSHE and citizenship curricula, in order to provide greater opportunities for the students to develop further their understanding and appreciation of life outside of school, as an aid to them understanding better their rights and responsibilities
- canvass pupils and parents more regularly to ascertain their views about the quality of the school's provision, especially in relation to school lunches and opportunities to engage in a greater range of decision-making activities
- ensure that reception children have regular access to outdoor learning
- develop baseline assessment to assess more accurately the children's age-related skills and personal attributes across all areas of learning when they begin the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development			√	
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
--	--	---	--	--

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage		√		

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Selective day school		
Date school opened	1995		
Age range of pupils	3–16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 210	Girls: 217	Total: 427
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 0	Girls: 3	Total: 3
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5,715 – £7,792		
Address of school	Royds Mount Luck Lane Marsh Huddersfield HD1 4QX		
Telephone number	01484 424549		
Email address	head@huddersfield-grammar.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs J L Straughan		
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd		