

Heworth Grange Comprehensive School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108407
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	356356
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Hancock 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	1296
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Dave Napier
Headteacher	Mr Chris Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
School address	High Lanes Felling, Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE10 0PT
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 38 lessons, which involved a total of 35 teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors met and talked with students in lessons and around the school. They observed the school's work and looked at 75 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and others from students and staff. Students' work and school documentation, such as safeguarding information and records of students' progress, were examined.

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

- How far the overall effectiveness of the school has been consolidated and improved since the last inspection.
- How far lessons fully challenge all groups of students, particularly in English and mathematics for boys working at higher levels and low attaining girls.
- How well the school is working with partners to reduce persistent absence and improve attendance.
- How well leadership and management at all levels impacts on achievement, teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Heworth Grange is a larger-than-average secondary school which has specialist status in the performing and the visual arts. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities including those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Nearly all students speak English as their first language and there are very few from minority ethnic groups. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A new school building is being constructed on the site and is due to be completed in 2012.

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 school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Heworth Grange is a satisfactory and improving school. The changes put in place in the last two years are starting to make an impact, following a dip in results in 2009. For example, GCSE A* to C results improved from 52% in 2007 to 79% this year and results including English and mathematics exceeded statutory targets. The school is aware that there is more to be done and is taking robust action, for example, to reduce the stubborn amount of persistent absence and improve attendance, which has been consistently below average. The senior leaders are making sure that the school continues to move forward and the capacity to improve is good. Governance is satisfactory and the school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are more effective and school improvement is driven by good leadership and management. The specialist status has enhanced provision and the school is on track to meet challenging targets.

The inspection evidence confirms that achievement, progress and learning are satisfactory and improving. The quality of learning is enhanced by good behaviour, care and support in lessons. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and they are challenged to learn at an appropriate level. Attainment is broadly average and rising. The senior leaders, accurately, predicted the improvement in results this year and current data show a further increase, which confirms a secure trend of improvement. All groups of students, including boys working at higher levels, lower-attaining girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress.

Teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is increasing. The school recognises there is not enough good and better teaching to sustain improvement and has made it a high priority to raise quality further because students are not always fully stretched and challenged in every lesson. Assessment practice is steadily improving. The new arrangement for tracking students' progress is working very effectively to identify underachievement and this is helping teachers to plan individual learning to good effect. The students' sense of spiritual, moral, social and cultural responsibility is developed well and the extent to which the students adopt healthy lifestyles is good. The school works closely with its partners to make improvements and relationships with parents and carers are increasingly effective. A new reporting system has been introduced which makes clear students' progress and the impact of non-attendance on target grades.

The students say they feel safe in school and partnerships to promote learning are a good feature as a result of close working between local schools and extended services. The school's strategy to promote community cohesion is satisfactory and there is capacity to make further improvement. The local community makes a positive contribution to a

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quickly developing curriculum which is significantly enhanced by outside activities, especially in the arts and music.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching significantly to raise attainment and achievement in all subjects by:
 - ensuring the best match of student's work and learning to need and ability
 - sharing outstanding practice from a range of providers
 - providing support and challenge from senior managers where students' progress is not consistently good
 - ensuring that assessment practice is consistently good.
- Improve attendance and reduce persistent absence by working even more closely with students, parents, carers, and partners.
- Up to 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

The students approach learning with positive attitudes. Their behaviour is good and they have a strong drive to succeed. The students say they learn quickly when engaged in practical tasks and project work which constantly challenge them to think and explore new ideas. They ask questions readily when they do not understand and are motivated by activities which meet their needs and interests. They are eager to learn and work well together. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson on propaganda, there was a good pace to learning and the students' concentration and enthusiasm were maintained throughout. Overall, from average starting points, they attain average standards at GCSE level and achievement is satisfactory.

The ability to work collaboratively has a marked effect on students' quality of learning as well as their social skills. This was exemplified in a Year 11 English lesson when groups of students worked with interest in an industrious atmosphere, developing their understanding of a classic book. The students learn best when they are always stretched and challenged by the work. The school is taking effective action to make sure this always happens, for example, through more frequent monitoring of teaching and learning to make sure that work is well matched to needs and that the level of challenge is maintained in all subjects.

The students are achieving more highly, particularly in the specialist subjects. The school's data suggests that the percentage will be significantly higher in 2011. All the different groups of students, including boys working at higher levels, low-attaining girls, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making better progress as a result of the sharp focus on being held to account by the detailed analysis of tracking information.

Attendance has been low in the last three years. It is significantly higher and broadly average at the time of the inspection. The improvement is the result of firm and effective action by senior leaders and close teamwork with partners to resolve any problems. The

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amount of persistent absence rose in 2009, but is lower now. The school knows that more can be done, particularly in partnership with parents and carers, to ensure persistent absence continues to decrease.

The students say they feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and lifestyle. They take part in physical and sporting activities regularly and make a good contribution to school and community life. Enterprise skills and the students' understanding of the world of work are developed effectively and enrichment activities make a good contribution to preparation for future lives. Cultural development is good, partly as a result of strong links with other countries, and the students' sense of spiritual, moral, and social and cultural responsibility is well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is rising. The school is taking the right action to raise teaching quality further in order to continue improving the rate of students' progress. The best teaching probes students understanding frequently and work is well matched to individual needs and ability. The school is aware that this is not always the case. The quality of teaching is not as high when work is insufficiently well differentiated and students spend too much time listening as a class and not developing their understanding through individual learning. Assessment practice is improving because the teachers are checking students' progress more

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frequently and the best practice provides clear steps for improvement. The school is taking the right action to make practice more consistent and ensure it is always good.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is developing quickly to meet the needs of all students. A strong feature is the enhancement of the curriculum by a wide range of enrichment activities. The specialist status of the school helps the students to develop a wide range of transferable skills through the visual and performing arts. The students thrive in a warm atmosphere and work with partners to support students needing additional help is a strong feature of the good care, guidance and support provided by staff. They settle in quickly in their first year, due to the good transition arrangements introduced in the last two years.

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?

Clear vision and robust action by the new headteacher and senior leaders is making sure that the school continues to improve. The impact can already be seen, for example, in better results, improved attendance, and higher achievement. The requirements for continuing the upward trend are well known, self-evaluation is accurate and capacity to improve is good because the right action to tackle any weaknesses is implemented successfully. For example, subject leaders are rigorously held to account for individual students' progress. The governing body is now supporting and challenging the school effectively, as a result of receiving more accurate information about performance.

Safeguarding arrangements are good and vetting procedures are frequently monitored. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively. All forms of discrimination and barriers to learning are being tackled. Resources are being used well to improve the learning environment and value for money is satisfactory. The school promotes community cohesion successfully and is committed to developing local, national and international links. The engagement of the school with parents and carers is good and their views are taken into account fully.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	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
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 sixth form provides a satisfactory education for the students. The majority of students are making satisfactory progress and attain examination results that are expected given their starting points in Year 12. The teaching is satisfactory and successfully involves the students in work which is based on their previous learning. Lessons are well structured and students' progress is assessed to give an accurate picture of how well they are doing. The care and support enjoyed by the students is valued, particularly when a difficulty is identified and they seek help. Satisfactory leadership of the sixth form makes sure communication between parents and carers is maintained effectively. The curriculum is developing quickly to meet the needs and interests of students well as a result of new partnerships with other providers.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account: 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

Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said the school keeps their children safe. The responses from the vast majority agreed that the school is well led and they are happy with their children's experience at the school. There were no particular trends in the small number of concerns received. The concerns were investigated during the inspection and evidence confirmed that the students are achieving satisfactorily.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heworth Grange Comprehensive 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 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,296 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	27	51	68	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	25	53	71	1	1	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	33	45	60	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	32	48	64	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	16	21	55	73	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	17	48	64	7	9	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	15	54	72	5	7	1	1
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)	19	25	49	65	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	28	50	67	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	23	52	69	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	23	44	59	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	23	51	68	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	36	46	61	1	1	1	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 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 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.



18 November 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Heworth Grange Comprehensive School, Gateshead NE10 0PT

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the school with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your school.

- Heworth Grange is a satisfactory and improving school.
- GCSE results have improved significantly.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the proportion of good teaching is rising.
- The care, guidance and support you receive are good and you feel safe.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team are making the right improvements to help you achieve even more.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the school even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- improve attendance further and reduce persistent absence
- make sure that attainment and achievement are always good
- increase the proportion of good and better teaching.

I know the staff would appreciate your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Hancock

Her Majesty's Inspector

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