

The Hathershaw College of Technology & Sport

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105730
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	355828
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Chambers 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1015
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Basit Shah
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Cawkwell
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2007
School address	Bellfield Avenue Hathershaw, Oldham Greater Manchester OL8 3EP
Telephone number	0161 7708555
Fax number	0161 7708556
Email address	cca@hathershaw.org.uk

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

T: 0300 1234 234

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E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 34 lessons involving 34 different teachers, and held meetings with groups of students, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including 139 parental questionnaires.

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

- Are the improvements in GCSE results sustainable, given the progress of current students?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and does the school have an accurate view of them?
- What has the school done to close gaps between the attainment and progress of different groups, and are the gaps in attainment evident in 2009 securely narrowed?
- What aspects of leadership and management have contributed most to improved outcomes for students?

Information about the school

Hathershaw College is an average-sized secondary school, serving communities from a mainly urban area of Oldham. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school houses a 12-place unit for the hearing impaired. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and the proportion whose first language is not English are much higher than in most schools. The school includes large groups of students from three ethnic groups: approximately 40% of the students are White British, 30% Pakistani and 20% Bangladeshi. The school has foundation status and works in partnership with three primary schools, supported by external partners, as part of West Oldham Cooperative Trust. The school has specialist status in technology and sport and holds a number of awards, including the International Schools Award and has achieved Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Hathershaw is a good school, where effective teaching, care and management have contributed to impressive gains in students' achievement. Students achieve well: they enter the school with attainment that is below average and leave having attained GCSE results that are in line with national averages, which represents good progress. Leaders and managers have successfully raised students' aspirations. Substantial and rapid gains in the students' overall attainment since the last inspection give an indication of the school's outstanding capacity to improve. However, improvements in a range of other areas, such as raising attendance, reducing exclusions and raising the attainment of previously underachieving groups provide strong additional evidence that leaders and managers can identify areas of weakness and take action that has a clear positive impact. The school has a good record of meeting demanding targets. Self-evaluation is accurate; the school knows itself very well and has identified suitable areas of focus for future improvements.

The school has appropriate plans for raising attainment further, and accepts that gains in some areas are more recent and less embedded than in others. While school monitoring records show that recent improvements are sustainable, leaders should continue to focus on raising the attainment of the most-able students and attainment of all students in English.

Students make good progress because of the good teaching that they receive and the effective care and support that promote positive attitudes to learning. Teachers plan well and use resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) to add an effective visual stimulus to the lesson and maintain a good pace of learning. Many teachers help students to assess their work or that of their peers using clear criteria, and, as a result, students learn effectively how they can improve. In the less effective lessons, teachers miss opportunities to develop independent learning or do not provide a consistently high level of challenge to students of all abilities in the class.

Students show good levels of personal development. For example, they behave well and respond well to opportunities to work together in groups. Their understanding of other cultures and religions contribute to their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The school's specialist status has a significant impact on provision. For example, all students study for a sports qualification in Year 9 and the curriculum at Key Stage 4 includes a wide range of sport and technology options. In addition, specialist status has helped the school to strengthen links with local schools and with other agencies, which has had a positive impact on students' motivation and personal development. External examination results show that targets in specialist subjects have been met.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment through building on recent improvements, particularly in English and for the most-able students.
- Improve teaching and learning through:
 - providing more opportunities for independent learning
 - taking more account of individual abilities in class and providing a consistently strong level of challenge for all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment has risen so that students now reach standards in line with national averages. In 2009, 42% of students gained five good GCSEs including English and mathematics, compared with a national average of 50%. The 2010 unvalidated results show that 48% of students attained the same measure. All groups of students, including those known to be eligible for a free school meal, make good progress in relation to their starting points. Students with special educational needs, including the hearing-impaired students based in the school, benefit from good levels of support and make progress in line with other groups. After some years of underachievement, the performance of students from White British backgrounds, particularly boys, improved dramatically in 2010 to match that of Pakistani and Bangladeshi students. Students enjoy their learning and make good progress in lessons through taking full advantage of the support available from their peers, as well as teaching and support staff. They particularly enjoy physical education and sport, both in lessons and in the activities available to them outside lessons.

Students say they feel safe and appreciate the importance of visitors to the school wearing clearly-visible badges. Bullying is rare; students know that there is always someone to turn to and are confident that staff will resolve any issues that arise. Students' good behaviour in lessons and their positive attitudes contribute strongly to their good progress. They are courteous and polite around school. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average. Students demonstrate a satisfactory development of workplace skills, for example through working well with others and using ICT effectively. Students have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle: they generally choose healthy meal options, with a significant number taking up the school's breakfast offer, and appreciate the benefits of extra-curricular sport. Students make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. For example, many become junior sports leaders; others take on posts of responsibility such as becoming young leaders, form representatives or members of the school council. Impressive numbers of students attend the school's Active Summer programme.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
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	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	3
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 and learning is good. Teachers' lesson planning is thorough and often includes a focus on how in-class assessment will help students to learn. Good relationships between teachers and students help students to settle quickly to the tasks set and to feel comfortable asking for help. Teachers use questioning well, although occasionally questions do not challenge the most able or give opportunities for students to give extended responses. The use of varied learning activities contributes to students' enjoyment of learning and maintains their interest and concentration. Students benefit from opportunities to reflect on how they learn effectively through a focus on 'learning to learn' activities.

The good curriculum meets students' needs well. Collaborative timetabling arrangements with other local schools enable additional options to be available at Key Stage 4. A foundation tier curriculum at Key Stage 3 and personalised pathways at Key Stage 4 make good provision for the needs of individuals and particular groups. Accreditation at GCSE through early entry is helping to maintain students' motivation, particularly that of boys. The diploma in construction has been popular with White British boys and has contributed to this group's improved achievement. A wide range of enrichment activities, many linked to the school's sports specialism, helps to raise students' aspirations and the development of personal skills.

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Students benefit from good care, guidance and support. Learning managers, supported by a range of other staff, ensure that all students, especially those who are vulnerable, have access to the support they need. Mixed-age tutor groups and a family ethos contribute to students feeling well cared for. High-quality support ensures that hearing-impaired students are fully integrated into lessons; these students appreciate greatly the help they receive in developing their communication skills. New students joining Year 7 benefit from a good induction programme which includes Hathershaw staff teaching introductory lessons in partner primary schools. The extensive measures introduced to promote good attendance have had a clear impact; for example, students now are much more aware of the importance attached to good attendance, and parent and carers understand that poor patterns of attendance are always followed up.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have used challenging targets effectively to raise attainment, eliminate underachievement, and narrow gaps in attainment between different groups. Moreover, the school's monitoring records indicate that, for current students, there are no significant gaps in the progress made by different groups. Leaders and managers have an accurate view of teaching in the school and can identify the strengths and weaknesses of a lesson. Their focus on improving teaching has helped to drive up standards; teachers and other staff are well motivated, have positive attitudes and are committed to improving outcomes for students. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion: the school's leading role in the West Oldham Trust strengthens its links with a range of partner organisations and helps students to understand more clearly the diverse nature of the local community. In addition, the growing links with schools abroad is adding to students' understanding of global issues very effectively. School staff enjoy positive relationships with parents and carers. The work being undertaken in preparation for the Leading Parent Partnership Award is evidence of the school's commitment to building partnerships further. The school is currently broadening opportunities for parents and carers to have access to elements of the school's internal website.

The school works exceptionally well with a range of partners to promote students' progress and well-being. For example, as well as the formal partnerships that form the West Oldham Trust, Year 7 students benefit from an intensive literacy and numeracy programme linked with Oldham and Arsenal football clubs. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are fully supportive of the school and keen to develop their role through undertaking further training, but their involvement in the school's self-evaluation is limited, as are direct links with individual departments. Leaders and

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managers, including governors, have a full understanding of their role in safeguarding students and the school meets all statutory requirements.

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	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	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of parents and carers contributed their views to the inspection team through the parental questionnaire. A large majority of replies indicate positive views of the school. Parents and carers believe that the school provides a safe environment, supporting the view of the inspection team that the school gives strong support to the welfare of its students. The large majority who believe that the school takes account of their views contributed to the inspection team's judgement that the school's engagement with parents and carers is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Hathershaw College of Technology & Sport 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 139 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,015 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	41	78	57	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	42	75	54	5	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	40	69	50	10	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	38	78	57	2	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	46	69	50	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	33	82	59	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	28	79	57	16	12	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)	54	39	71	51	2	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	31	86	62	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	34	76	55	4	3	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	26	87	63	9	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	34	82	59	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	44	73	53	1	1	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 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.



8 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Hathershaw College of Technology & Sport, Oldham, OL8 3EP

You will recall that recently a team of inspectors and I inspected your school. Thank you for making our visit to the school so interesting and enjoyable.

We judged that Hathershaw is a good school, where effective teaching, care and management have contributed to impressive gains in students' achievement in recent years. You make good progress in your work and achieve well.

We noted that improvements in some areas are more recent and need to be consolidated. As a result, we have asked the school's leaders to continue to focus on raising the attainment of the most able overall and all of you in English.

You make good progress because of the good teaching that you receive and the effective care and support that help you to develop positive attitudes to learning. We have asked the school's leaders to ensure that teaching is even better through developing further your independent learning skills and providing a consistently high level of challenge to all of you, whatever ability.

You behave well and respond well to opportunities to work together in groups. You can help the school to improve further by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the many opportunities that the school offers. I am pleased that more of you are now attending regularly and would like to stress how important it is that you maintain this improvement.

Yours sincerely

Paul Chambers

Her Majesty's Inspector

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