

Hastings High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120250
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	358725
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Trevor Riddiough 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	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	564
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Dalby
Headteacher	Matthew Pike
Date of previous school inspection	16 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 30 teachers in 30 lessons and two assemblies. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body, the principal of the partner upper school and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, pupils' work, whole school and subject development plans, numerous policies, school documents and case studies. Completed questionnaires from 178 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- How accurate are teachers' assessments in all subjects?
- What is the quality of teaching and learning across the school?
- To what extent does the school ensure that the curriculum, at all ages, meets the needs of the pupils?
- How effective is school improvement planning at all management levels?

Information about the school

Hastings High School is smaller than average. It takes pupils from a wide geographical area around Burbage, including Sharnford, Stoney Stanton and Hinckley. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The school population is largely White British and very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. None are at the early stages of learning English. Since the last inspection the school has received or been reaccredited with a number of awards: Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools status, Diana Anti-Bullying Award, International School Award and has recently gained the quality mark for being a Dyslexia Friendly School.

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

2

Main findings

Hastings High is an outstanding school. It aims to provide 'the best for every child'. This is a key strength of the school and, as a result of this high aspiration, coupled with good teaching and an exciting and engaging curriculum, pupils make good progress in their learning, while pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. Individual pupils are very well known by staff and every effort is made to support all pupils in their learning, reflecting the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support that pupils receive at the school. A parent wrote, 'We have found the school to be very good in recognising our son's capabilities and maximising his full potential.'

The standards reached by pupils have improved consistently. In 2010 they were exceptionally high at the end of Year 9 in the overwhelming majority of subjects. The school has established a very thorough system for recording and tracking pupils' assessments, which includes the external validation of the assessments that teachers make. This system is used to evaluate pupils' progress regularly, to identify any concerns and to agree an appropriate response to improve their achievement. Pupils' good progress is confirmed by observations of lessons during the inspection. Teachers are well qualified to teach their specialist subjects so that pupils receive a very good learning experience. Some minor inconsistencies remain. Not all pupils understand in detail how to improve their work and marking is not yet at a consistently high quality for all pupils to maximise their progress in lessons. In some lessons, the teaching provides too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own learning independence.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is well regarded and provides outstanding leadership. He has accomplished important developments which are secured because he has planned carefully to introduce improvements incrementally and strategically through his team of middle leaders. He has established a shared ethos of high expectations. Self-evaluation is undertaken by all leaders and managers. It is rigorous and accurately reflects the strengths of the school and what needs to be improved. Since the last inspection, standards and attendance have improved, the curriculum better meets the needs of pupils, and the support for pupils' personal and academic development have developed markedly; this is a notable track record which demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve and its ongoing ambition to get even better.

The school works hard to develop pupils' future economic well-being. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well developed and pupils' life skills are enhanced through the highly focused 'Theme Days'. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. The school works well with other education partners, agencies, and the community to improve pupils' experiences and

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achievement. Many parents and carers commented positively on the school's responsiveness but a minority felt that their views were not sought and that they did not receive enough information about how they could support their child's learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use marking and feedback to make explicit to pupils how they can improve their learning
 - supporting pupils to become independent learners.
- Improve communication with parents and carers by:
 - ensuring that they are better informed about how they can support their child's learning
 - seeking their views about the school's innovations and developments.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment on entry to the school is above average. By the time the pupils leave Year 9, their attainment is high in almost all subjects. This represents good progress overall. The progress made by all groups of pupils represented at the school is also good and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities it is outstanding due to the quality of support they receive and the teachers' good understanding of their needs. Pupils' good progress is confirmed by observations of lessons during the inspection. Pupils are highly engaged in their learning and they take part enthusiastically. In most lessons, tasks are tailored to the pupils' varying learning needs which ensure that all pupils make at least good progress.

Pupils enjoy school and this is indicated by their good behaviour both in and outside lessons as well as by their high attendance. They feel extremely safe and in discussions with inspectors indicated that if they experienced problems they could approach any adult in the school and were confident that their concerns would be taken up. One group of pupils reported that 'Teachers are always interested in what we do and how we feel.' Pupils have good opportunities and encouragement to be healthy, for example, in taking healthy options in the canteen and in the high take up of extra-curricular sport. They make a positive contribution to school and community life through mentoring younger pupils, becoming junior sports leaders and in the extensive charity work that is undertaken. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good while their appreciation of other faiths and different cultures in the United Kingdom is less developed.

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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	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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?

In the best lessons, teaching is stimulating and well paced and provides an appropriate level of challenge for different learners. In some excellent lessons, teachers provide pupils with detailed feedback on how to improve their work both orally in the lesson and in the marking. In these lessons teachers encourage students to learn independently and assess each other's work but these practices are not yet consistent and systematic across the school. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is accurate and secure. They make good use of a stimulating range of attractive resources, including the use of ICT, which engages pupils in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes. Most teachers create a positive and supportive environment where pupils are encouraged to take risks and learn by their mistakes. As a result, pupils respond well, work hard, and make good progress. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum provides exciting experiences both in lessons and on educational visits, which pupils remember. These contribute greatly to pupils' high-quality learning and their wider personal development. As well as meeting all statutory requirements for a broad and balanced curriculum, the school also offers a wide range of experiences to enrich learning in imaginative ways and to meet the needs of each individual pupil. The 'Theme Days' provide opportunities for pupils to develop personal skills in an enjoyable way. These skills

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are also developed through modular studies, the tutorial programme and through the personal, social and health education curriculum. The programme of highly-tailored, short courses enables a wide range of pupils to benefit. For example, gifted and talented musicians, those with dyslexia and new arrivals to the school all have courses designed specially for them. There is also a very rich programme of extra-curricular activities which are well attended and educational visits add rich learning experiences, for example through the trips to Normandy and to Beth Shalom. Pupils are stretched academically through accelerated courses where some Year 9 pupils are introduced to GCSE coursework in English and mathematics.

The school cares sensitively and precisely for pupils with a wide range of needs, for example physical disabilities and visual impairment, as well as for those whose personal circumstances make them vulnerable. This contributes to their outstanding achievement. Careful and highly individual guidance and support are provided to pupils in Year 6 coming into the school and to pupils in Year 9 leaving, so that their transition happens smoothly and choices are made appropriately. One pupil said to inspectors, 'When I left primary school it felt like I was leaving a family, but now I have joined another!'

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?

At the heart of the school's success is the quality of leadership and management, whose effectiveness in securing improvement is outstanding. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has brought about significant improvements to the school over the past few years, though minor inconsistencies in teaching remain to be tackled. His drive and determination are shared by the senior and middle leadership teams and governing body and there is a strong sense of common purpose across the school. Self-evaluation is evident at all management levels and it is rigorous. This helps to inform the school development plan, which is also based on wide consultations, so that it identifies the right priorities for continuing improvement. Governance is outstanding. Governors have first-hand experience of school life. The governing body is both supportive and critical and holds the school to account extremely well. Governors are well informed and play an active part in the school, for example, by taking part as the dragons in a 'Dragons' Den' simulation exercise to develop pupils' enterprise. Astute management of resources enables the school to provide excellent value for money.

The school's inclusive approach is highly effective in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. All groups of pupils make at least good progress and are well supported by

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the school's curriculum which contributes significantly to fulfilling one of the school's stated aims to promote equality of opportunity for all.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Procedures, policies and protocols to safeguard pupils are robust. They are closely followed and staff are appropriately trained. Community cohesion is good. The school has carried out a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and has developed an appropriate action plan in response. Local impact is strong and global interactions are developing well with established links in France. National cohesion aspects are less strong and the school is working hard to address this.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school. Many strongly agreed that they were happy with their children's overall school experience. A minority of parents and carers felt that their views were not sought and that they did not receive enough information about how they could support their child's learning. This is borne out by the lack of a formal parent forum at present.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hastings High 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 178 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 564 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	39	103	58	2	1	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	61	34	111	62	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	50	28	113	63	11	6	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	35	96	54	12	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	26	115	65	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	13	115	65	25	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	20	122	69	12	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)	47	26	110	62	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	30	105	59	10	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	28	100	56	9	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	18	96	54	12	7	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	57	32	105	59	7	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	39	92	52	12	7	2	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.



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Hastings High School, Burbage, LE10 2QE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we inspected your school. Your views were very helpful and we enjoyed our discussions with those of you we spoke to in lessons, in meetings and around the school.

We found that your school provides you with an outstanding education. You told us that you really enjoy coming to school and that you feel very safe. There are excellent relationships between yourselves and your teachers and you are well supported by your teachers academically in your lessons and personally, especially if you have any problems. Your teachers prepare you well for academic success and set high expectations. Your behaviour in classes and towards each other is generally good. The curriculum provides you with some memorable experiences and there are many opportunities for you to get involved fully in school life. You take on a wide range of activities, including opportunities to show leadership skills and help younger pupils.

Your school is extremely well led by your headteacher and his team of leaders and managers, who are determined to ensure that it provides the best for every one of you. Even outstanding schools have areas to work on. I have therefore asked your headteacher and senior staff to work on helping you to maximise your learning by giving you clear advice on how to improve and by helping you to learn independently of your teachers. This is an area where you can help by making sure you act upon advice given when your work is marked. I have also asked that communication with your parents and carers be improved so that they understand better how to support your learning. The school will also seek their views about school life.

I wish you all success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Hastings.

Yours sincerely,

Trevor Riddiough

Her Majesty's Inspector

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