

Lady Hawkins' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116940
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	358059
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Sims 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	446
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Sharp
Headteacher	Gary House
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2007
School address	Park View Kington HR5 3AR
Telephone number	01544 230441
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Email address	enquiries@lhs.hereford.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons taught by 29 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and students, and they held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, improvement plans, progress reports, and minutes of governing body meetings and records of students' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 89 parents and carers and took account of pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the impact of leaders and managers at all levels to bring about improvements?
- How high are current standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 in subjects other than English and mathematics?
- What is the quality of provision and outcomes for girls in the school including the sixth form?
- What is the link between the quality of provision and outcomes in the sixth form?
- To what extent does the school promote healthy lifestyles?

Information about the school

Lady Hawkins' is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school. Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is very small, as is the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The school has a specialism in humanities and has gained Healthy Schools status. The headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

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****2**

Main findings

Lady Hawkins' is a good school. It has a number of outstanding features.

One parent summed up the views of many others saying, 'My child is very happy here', whilst another stated, 'The staff are very approachable and helpful in response to any concerns I or my child have.'

The extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Students have numerous opportunities for exercise through timetabled sports lessons and extra-curricular activities. They have an extensive awareness of the importance of healthy eating, which was reflected in lessons seen including science and food technology and the award of Healthy Schools status. Students' contribution to the local, national and international community is exceptional. Community cohesion, driven by the humanities specialism, enables students to take part in a very wide range of community events and trips ensuring they are gaining a clear understanding of their locality and those on a national and international level. International projects in Europe and Africa have enabled many students to experience a contrasting lifestyle. Students enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in the very high and rising proportion of those who attend regularly and the significant reduction in exclusions.

Although, initially, results continued to improve after the last inspection, the present headteacher joined the school at a time when attainment, especially in the sixth form, was in decline. This led to disappointing examination results at Key Stages 4 and 5 in 2010 although results were in line with the national average. Attainment on entry of last year's Year 11 was below average so this still represented good progress overall but progress was better in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Girls did not do as well as boys in these examinations but in lessons seen and in projected results for Year 11 they are now doing equally well. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in line with their peers.

The headteacher and other school leaders have established a clear vision for the school and aspirations are high. The teachers in the school are in full support of this vision and are well motivated and this had led to rapid improvements in provision. The school has good capacity to improve because leaders have consolidated existing strengths in its provision for care, guidance and support, particularly in its support for students at risk from becoming vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum, which is good, has been extended further to provide more vocational courses tailored to the needs of a wider range of students. Many of these additional courses are relatively new so have not had sufficient time to have an impact on results. However, indications from the school's monitoring of Year 11 suggest that the current cohort is on track to reach above average standards in examinations by the end of Key Stage 4.

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There have been significant changes in the leadership leading to a restructured pastoral system, widely welcomed by staff, and a greater accountability for the role of subject and faculty leaders. Leaders recognise, however, that there is further progress to be made in that devolving greater responsibility to senior and middle leaders and their line management arrangements have not been sufficiently developed. However a rigorous system of data analysis and tracking of students has been established which has led to more effective monitoring of progress. Leaders at all levels know strengths and weaknesses well in their areas of responsibility through accurate self-evaluation.

Teaching is good overall. Those lessons characterised as outstanding enabled students to take more responsibility for their own learning and moved the students' learning on at a fast pace. The humanities specialism has made a significant contribution to outstanding lessons and assessment. There remains inconsistency in some other lessons which are too teacher led which leads to some passive learning and do not plan sufficiently for the needs of all groups of learners.

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Success rates dropped in 2010 as too many students were on courses ill suited to their needs. A new head of sixth form has been appointed and significant changes have been made to ensure a wider range of courses and accreditation. With further new courses planned for the future, this remains work in progress. Consequently provision and leadership and management are satisfactory. However sixth formers make a significant contribution to the school and wider community

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment by ensuring teachers consistently:
 - plan for the needs of different groups of students
 - provide written feedback that shows students how they can improve
 - provide opportunities for students to work independently and take responsibility for their learning by reducing the proportion of teacher-led activities.
- Devolve greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by:
 - ensuring senior leaders have an enhanced role in leading and managing the work of faculty leaders
 - enabling faculty and subject leaders to play a greater role in monitoring teaching and learning in their subject.
- Raise success rates in the sixth form by
 - providing a wider range of courses at different levels of accreditation that matches students' different abilities and aspiration.
 - ensuring courses are well matched to the starting points of students

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The quality of students' learning is good because, in most lessons, teachers provide activities that stimulate and engage them either in the subject content or through practical

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activities and group work. Students' attitudes to learning are very good and they behave well in lessons. At times, they are passive if activities are too teacher led but, when given the opportunity to take control of the learning, they grasp it enthusiastically. The good learning in lessons ensures that students make good progress from their below-average starting points when they join the school to broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 4. Progress is strong in English and mathematics but there was some unevenness in how well students did in other subjects in the most recent GCSE examinations. Pupils did well in computer studies and modern languages where teaching was strong and less well in design and technology, geography, history and science where there were inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and disruption to staffing.

Students get on very well together and there are very few incidents of racism and bullying. Most students say they are kept safe and are confident that any incidents that do occur are dealt with promptly and very effectively. Students are prepared well for the next steps in their future. The good progress they make in English and mathematics and the opportunities they get to use information and communication technology ensure they have a good grounding of basic skills.

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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
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?

Students get on well with their teachers. Even on those occasions when the pace slackens and teachers are doing most of the work from the front, students still show interest in

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their work. They respond well when they can make choices, discuss work and find things out for themselves. The best lesson plans ensure that learning tasks suit a wide range of individual needs. At times, however, there is a 'one size fits all' approach to lesson planning. Assessment of students' work is usually carried out well throughout the school. It is particularly effective in English. Most books are marked regularly and nearly all departments employ 'how to improve' comments in teachers' marking. Marking at its best helps students to know what to do to improve. Where marking is less detailed or weighted towards praise, lower-attaining students, in particular, do not have such a clear idea of how they could improve their work.

The introduction of additional vocational courses, such as countryside and environment, has made more pathways available for students. This approach is leading to a highly tailored curriculum for all individuals and groups of learners and is having significant impact on students' levels of motivation and engagement. The school made clear its plans to expand provision at Key Stage 4 further in the future. Intervention strategies, for groups who are underachieving during Year 10 are proving successful in enabling students to gain better grades in English and mathematics. Students begin their GCSE courses during Year 9, which helps them to get off to a good start. At Key Stage 3, the school is implementing the new National Curriculum in all areas, and includes effective cross-curricular links between art, music and English. The school provides an extensive enrichment programme which is a combination of theme days and events; for example the students are given many opportunities to visit places outside of the county. There is a broad extra-curricular programme at lunchtime and after school, providing a wide-ranging mix of academic, social and sporting activities. The school has developed strong international links through the curriculum, for example through its humanities specialism links with Uganda.

The good care, guidance and support students receive plays an important role in contributing to their good outcomes. Teaching assistants help to raise the achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The out-of-class provision for these pupils is effective but, sometimes in lessons, teachers' planning is not sufficiently focussed on their role. Staff know their students well. Parents and carers comment very positively about the openness of staff and their willingness to support their children. The school provides a safe, secure, welcoming environment and works well in supporting students at risk from becoming vulnerable. The school's work on sex and relationships has led to significant reduction in teenage pregnancies locally.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The quality of planning has improved since the last inspection with all faculties involved in self-evaluation and action planning. As a result, most students make good progress. Performance management procedures are rigorous. Strengths and weaknesses within teaching have been clearly identified, with effective support provided where necessary. Systems for monitoring teaching are robust although faculty and subject leaders are insufficiently involved in monitoring lessons. Too much of the line management of faculties rests with the headteacher. The governing body is supportive and provides an appropriate amount of challenge to the headteacher and other senior leaders. It has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and discharges its statutory responsibilities effectively.

The school keeps parents and carers up to date with school matters through a regular newsletter, the website and parents' evenings. The school has a Leading Edge partnership with two schools which is helping them to provide a curriculum suitable for students in a rural environment. Equality of opportunity is well promoted. This is an inclusive school. All students, regardless of circumstances, are enabled to take part in school activities and this is closely monitored by senior staff. The school has a clear audit and action plan for community cohesion which is regularly evaluated to ensure that community cohesion is well integrated into the work of the school. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and policies meet all requirements. Training of staff is up to date and steps have been taken to integrate aspects of safeguarding into the curriculum.

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	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Sixth form

Outcomes for the sixth form are satisfactory. After a rising trend in success rates up to 2009, there was a sharp fall in the most recent examination results. Girls did not do as well as boys when compared to the national averages for A level but at AS level, both boys and girls made similar satisfactory progress. Students join the sixth form having reached a broadly average level of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4. Success rates are broadly average by the time they leave the sixth form. The students' personal development has many outstanding features, such as their contribution within the school and beyond. For example, older students take significant responsibilities for supporting younger students in school and outside, for example on residential trips, during tutor groups and in their lessons. They take on many additional roles as senior prefects, lunchtime supervisors and buddies. They have been involved in trips to Uganda and Auschwitz that have contributed significantly to their personal development.

The school has recognised the need for changes in the curriculum and, in 2010, appointed a new head of sixth form. In a very short space of time, a number of additions have been made to the curriculum, particularly for vocational courses and a wide range of accreditation other than A and AS level. This is because too many students were misplaced on courses not suited to them. The school has raised the entry threshold for A and AS level courses and extended the curriculum time for each course in Year 12, all of which is leading to improved outcomes for students currently on courses. However, as some courses have not yet seen their first cohort through and other courses have yet to start, it is too early to see the full impact of these changes on success rates.

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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the survey said that overall they were happy with their child's experience at Lady Hawkins'. Almost all said that the school keeps their children safe. A very large majority of parents and carers agreed with all the other questions on the questionnaire. In particular, most said that their children enjoy school and are well prepared for the future. A very small minority of parents did not agree that the school helps to keep their child healthy or helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors investigated their concerns but judged outcomes for healthy lifestyles to be outstanding and engagement with parents and carers to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lady Hawkins' 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 446 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	35	53	60	3	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	40	52	58	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	34	47	53	11	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	38	46	52	6	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	34	49	55	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	29	46	52	14	16	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	22	52	58	16	18	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)	37	42	45	51	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	35	46	52	7	8	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	29	47	53	10	11	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	22	54	61	7	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	27	55	62	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	38	48	54	2	2	2	2

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



11 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Lady Hawkins' School, Kington, HR5 3AR

You will know that we visited recently to inspect your school. Thank you to all of you who took the time to speak to us or told us your views through the pupil questionnaires. Lady Hawkins' is a good school. There are a number of aspects which we have said are outstanding and of which you can be proud. Your level of attendance is high and you clearly enjoy coming to school. You are encouraged by the school through the opportunities it provides to make an outstanding contribution to help and support others at home and abroad. You show this too in the way you get on with each other, and respect and understand peoples' differences. You have an exceptional understanding of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles in sport and eating.

Most of you make good progress from the time you start school at the beginning of Year 7 up to your GCSE examinations, particularly in English and mathematics. Standards are broadly average by the time you leave Year 11. Those of you in the sixth form make satisfactory progress to achieve broadly average success rates. Your leaders and managers have worked hard with your headteacher to bring about improvements by providing a wider range of course to suit your different needs, more detailed tracking of how well you are doing and a new pastoral system which has ensured that the curriculum and care guidance and support you receive is good.

There are a few things we have asked your senior and subject leaders to do to raise standards further. Most of your lessons are at least good but we have asked the school to ensure greater consistency in the way your teachers plan for your different needs and interests and give you written feedback on how you could improve. You can help by asking your teachers if you are not sure how you could improve your work further. We have asked you senior and subject leaders to make sure they play a greater role in checking this. In the sixth form, whilst a number of new courses have been introduced, we have asked the school to provide a wider range of courses at different levels so that more of you can enjoy the benefits of the provision.

Thank you again for your friendly welcome to Lady Hawkins'. I would like to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

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