

# Hamstead Hall Community Learning Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103516
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355399
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Sims HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1130
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter French
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kendrick Morris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Craythorne Avenue Handsworth Wood, Birmingham B20 1HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 386 7510
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**Inspection number**      355399

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by 20 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, students, school partners and 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, minutes of governing body meetings and records of students' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 169 parents and carers and took account of student questionnaires.

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

- How high is the achievement of Indian students and students who speak English as an additional language?
- How effectively does teachers' lesson planning meet the needs of different groups of learners?
- How successfully are leaders and managers promoting equality of opportunity for different groups of students?
- What is the quality of care, guidance and support for students whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable?

## Information about the school

Hamstead Hall is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It is situated on the northern outskirts of Birmingham. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above the national average, as is the percentage of students who speak English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic groups are students of Indian and Black Caribbean origin. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average because of the provision of a special needs resource base. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has specialist status in sport.

**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

Hamstead Hall is a good school. It has many outstanding features. The very high quality of the care, guidance and support it provides to students, particularly those at risk of becoming vulnerable, leads to a number of exceptional outcomes. According to one parent, 'Hamstead Hall is the best thing that ever happened to my son. He is doing really well, both in his sports and education. I'm so pleased with the support he gets from the teachers.' The very large majority of students say they feel safe at all times and parents and carers strongly agree with this. Students' contribution to the local, national and international community is exceptional. This has led to older students travelling to The Gambia to help design, build and support a new school for students there, and at home participating in a local young people's parliament.

The extent to which students develop skills that will help them in their future lives is also outstanding. Students take responsibility for managing their own cinema business, where they are in charge of all the managerial and financial decisions. Their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Students display a very high degree of knowledge and respect for differences within the school. This is also reflected in the outstanding way the school promotes community cohesion. The rigour with which the school tracks the progress of different groups and then addresses any gaps ensures that it promotes equal opportunities extremely well.

Teaching is good. The very high quality of relationships and teachers' excellent subject knowledge enable teachers to group students in such a way that they can support each other. Written planning for different groups of learners is not of a consistently high quality although teachers skilfully match up higher and lower attaining students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language. This enables students to support each other and ensure that all groups make good progress. At times some students are not clear what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson and although verbal feedback is strong, written feedback on how they are doing and what they need to do to improve is varied in its quality.

The curriculum is outstanding. It is tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of different groups and individuals well. It caters for a wide degree of academic and vocational courses and is flexible in the way it is delivered. Leaders and managers are highly effective in the way they engage with parents and carers and a range of other partners. The governing body plays an outstanding role in providing support and challenge to the school's leaders. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding. They are rigorous and robust.

Students join the school at the start of Year 7 having reached standards in English, mathematics and science that are broadly average. By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 4, the proportion who have achieved five or more good grades at GCSE

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including English and mathematics is higher than the national average. All groups of students make good progress, regardless of their ability or background. Good provision through a specialised curriculum in the resource base helps to ensure that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in line with their peers.

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Hamstead Hall works closely in partnership with other providers to give students a wide range of courses suited to individual needs. Whilst success rates are good, only a small proportion go on to reach the highest possible grades in A and AS courses. The leadership of the sixth form is in a state of transition. It is currently under review to clarify roles and responsibilities. Consequently monitoring and tracking of the progress of individuals and groups of students is insufficiently rigorous. The leadership structure is under review.

Overall the school has good capacity to improve further. It has established a strong track record of ongoing improvements in attainment and in addressing previous equalities issues such as the underachievement of boys and the high rate of exclusion of Black Caribbean boys. The school's leaders are highly effective in growing expertise and leadership from within the school and rightly have a well-deserved reputation with their local partners for the quality of the school's outreach work, not least through its sports specialism and sixth form partnerships.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching matches that of the very best lessons by:
  - setting learning objectives so that different groups of learners know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson
  - consistently sharing learning objectives with students so they know what they are expected to learn
  - regularly providing written feedback to students that shows them exactly how well they are doing and how they can improve their work
- Ensure that all students in the sixth form make as much progress as they can to achieve the highest possible grades by:
  - systematically monitoring and evaluating how well individual students are doing
  - clarifying roles and responsibilities of leaders in the sixth form as quickly as possible during a period of change and review.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students learn well in lessons because of the very high quality of relationships in the classroom between teachers and different groups of learners. This enables students to learn from each other through working collaboratively and providing mutual support. Students' enjoyment and teachers' enthusiasm and knowledge ensure that even in the minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, good learning still takes place. Consequently all groups of students achieve well in English, mathematics and science. There is a rising trend over time in the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics.

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Attendance levels are high because students want to learn and the overwhelming majority arrive punctually for lessons despite the large size of the campus. Behaviour is good and incidents of racism and bullying are rare, but those which do occur are dealt with swiftly. In many lessons students' attitudes to learning are outstanding. Students have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles through the healthy meal options in the canteen and the range of sporting opportunities taken up through the school's subject specialism. However, a minority of students who completed the student survey did not agree that the school prepares them well for a healthy lifestyle.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and this makes a significant contribution to the progress that students make. The best lessons have a lively pace and a range of activities which fully engage and interest students through pair and group discussion where they can explain to each other what they know and understand. Teachers' questioning encourages students to reflect to deepen their understanding. Support staff are deployed well and make a good contribution to students' learning. Assessment of students' work is particularly strong in English and science and generally is used well through the school. Presentation of work is good and books are marked regularly, but the quality of written feedback helping students to know what to do to improve is variable and an area for continued development. The quality of lesson planning is inconsistent and too often

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learning objectives for lessons are a list of tasks to be accomplished rather than focusing on what students should be able to do by the end of the lesson.

The curriculum is excellent because of the wide range of courses offered through partnership and collegiate arrangements that often support other schools. At Key Stage 4 an extensive range of vocational courses is further enriched by after-school options, for example in additional languages. As a specialist sports college it has developed additional courses linked to other subjects and made very good use of links in the local community, for example with Aston Villa Football Club. There are additional GCSE options for higher attaining students such as additional mathematics. The innovative Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme makes a significant contribution to promoting outstanding outcomes for students, such as their economic well-being.

The excellent care, guidance and support have a significant impact on outcomes for students. Very good arrangements for transition from primary to secondary school ensure students enter a welcoming environment. Work with families at risk of becoming vulnerable due to their circumstances is highly effective. Effective academic guidance ensures students take the courses in Key Stage 4 most suited to them. Excellent behaviour management and support has led to a dramatic reduction in behavioural incidents and exclusions. The school provides good support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both in mainstream lessons and through an alternative curriculum including a specialist resource base.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders have a strong vision for the school and a clarity about its direction which is shared by staff. The headteacher and senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They have developed a good distribution of roles and responsibilities leading to increased capacity for further improvement through the leadership structure. The experienced and highly skilled governing body provides rigorous challenge to the school through analysis of data and frequent visits to the school. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding because the very well structured and organised team responsible for child protection has ensured that systems and procedures are as robust as they can possibly be.

Partnerships through the school's specialism and other links are a significant strength which has led to many local partners benefiting from the support they have received, and in turn has contributed to the outstanding curriculum and care, guidance and support provided by the school.



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The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding because the school, through its detailed understanding of the local, wider national and international community, has enabled its students to take responsibility for a range of initiatives at home and abroad which deepen their knowledge and understanding of people's differences. This is also reflected in leaders' high priority on promoting equal opportunities and ensuring any differences in achievement between various groups are addressed quickly. Overall the school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Outcomes for the sixth form are good. In particular, the students' personal development is outstanding and they gain qualifications that help them to move onto their chosen career or into higher education. In spite of slightly disappointing results at AS in the most recent examinations, the trend over the last three years has been of increasing numbers of students taking A and AS qualifications with above average pass rates and students achieving better than expected. Fewer students gained the higher grades when compared with national averages. Students do particularly well in the vocational subjects, where provision is good. Courses are based on students' needs when surveyed in Key Stage 4. The opportunities to work with younger students and to contribute to the community and beyond are outstanding. They include working in local hospices, as sports leaders and in a school in The Gambia. The Duke of Edinburgh award scheme has high numbers of students participating.

Students speak highly of the support and opportunities provided by the school with comments such as 'you are always being encouraged to look to the future and beyond school'. The careers day observed during the inspection was exceptionally well planned with outside speakers from a wide range of professions and occupations. Lesson

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observations, discussions with students and staff, and the local authority review confirm that teaching is good. The leadership and management of the sixth form are in a transitional phase, but it is clear that all staff from subject leaders to tutors to heads of year are committed to achieving the best for the students. Clear plans are in place to raise achievement further and predictions for 2011 results indicate improved performance.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

## 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 Hamstead Hall. In particular, a very large majority said their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. Most said they were well informed about the progress their children were making. The large majority thought their children were well taught and were making good progress. A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school helps to keep their child healthy or takes enough account of their concerns. Inspectors investigated their concerns, but judged provision for healthy lifestyles to be good and communication with parents and carers to be outstanding.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hamstead Hall Community Learning Centre 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 169 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	65	38	96	57	7	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	38	96	57	8	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	39	92	54	11	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	31	104	62	10	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	30	106	63	11	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	25	106	63	15	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	23	98	58	28	17	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)	50	30	100	59	8	5	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	27	103	61	16	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	34	95	56	13	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	19	107	63	19	11	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	60	36	95	56	11	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	43	90	53	5	3	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	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



28 January 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Hamstead Hall Community Learning Centre, Birmingham, B20 1HL**

I am sure you will be aware that we recently came to inspect your school. Thank you to everyone who spoke to us directly or told us your views through the student questionnaires. We are very grateful for everything you have told us.

Hamstead Hall is a good school. There are a number of significant features which we have judged to be outstanding of which you can be proud. The curriculum provides you with a very wide range of subjects and types of courses which suit all of your needs. Your leaders provide excellent care, guidance and support to you all to ensure that, as you have said, you feel very safe and well looked after. In turn you make an outstanding contribution to help and support others at home and abroad, including building a school in The Gambia. You are developing your skills very well to prepare for your future lives. You show an exceptional level of understanding and respect for each other's differences, which is why relationships are such a strength in the school.

Most of you make good progress from when you join the school at the start of Year 7 to taking your GCSE examinations. Year-on-year results are improving and more of you get five good grades including English and mathematics than nationally. We have asked the school to do a few things to improve it even further. The quality of teaching and the way you are assessed are good overall, but we have asked the school to ensure that teaching and the way you are told how well you are doing consistently match the practice seen in the best lessons. You can help by ensuring you record your current levels and targets so you can refer to them in lessons. In the sixth form, although success rates are good on courses the school should aim for more of you to reach the highest possible grades or levels, and it should clarify as soon as possible the leadership structure in the sixth form.

Thank you for making us feel so welcome at Hamstead Hall and I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

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