

Honley High School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 107763 |
| Local Authority | Kirklees |
| Inspection number | 363729 |
| Inspection dates | 30–31 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | John Young HMI |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1262 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Jan Wallis |
| Headteacher | Mr Chris Sylge |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 April 2008 |
| School address | Station Road Honley, Holmfirth West Yorkshire HD9 6QJ |
| Telephone number | 01484 222347 |
| Fax number | 01484 222314 |
| Email address | office.honley@kirklees-schools.org.uk |

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 39 lessons involving 39 different teachers and covering 18 subjects. They also held discussions with school staff, the School Improvement Partner, two members of the governing body and students from every year group in the school. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of other evidence including safeguarding procedures, case studies and self-evaluation documents. Inspectors also analysed the 262 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires, 52 staff questionnaires and 150 students' questionnaires.

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

- Different groups of students' progress relative to their capabilities and starting points, especially less-able students, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The impact of teaching on learning for all groups of students.
- Whether curricular provision fully met the needs of the range of students the school serves, including those on the autistic spectrum.
- The impact of strategies to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- How effectively leaders have addressed previously identified issues and sustained or improved students' outcomes and the quality of provision.

Information about the school

At this larger than average-sized secondary school, the very large majority of students are White British and live locally. The remaining small numbers of students originate from a variety of minority ethnic heritages, of which mixed White and Black Caribbean, and Pakistani heritage students are the two largest groups. Few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. However, the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. This is linked to the school's specialist provision for students with autistic spectrum disorder.

The school has Specialist Science and Mathematics College status and holds various awards, including the Sportsmark award, the CEIAG Quality Standard and the Connexions Quality Standard. The school has also attained Learning Partnership Status with the Royal Shakespeare Company, and provides some extended services, such as study support. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have left their posts along with several members of the senior leadership team. The new headteacher took up his post in January 2011. The new Chair of the Governing Body took up her post in September 2010.

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

On balance, the educational experience students receive at Honley High School is good and confirms that the school provides good value for money. This achievement is due to the combined efforts of efficient staff, motivated students, largely effective leadership and suitable governance. The school's specialist subjects perform highly and contribute strongly to driving up whole-school standards. However, leaders and managers are acutely aware that aspects of the school's work require improvement in order to become outstanding.

Most students' achievement is good and their attainment is well above average and rising. However, there are groups of students, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, who have consistently underperformed and their attainment is lower than their peers nationally. The school also recognises that more of the most-able students should be gaining the highest grades. Importantly, inspection evidence and the school's latest data show that the progress of each of these groups is being accelerated. The impact of teaching, the use of assessment to support students' learning, and the curriculum are all good. Nevertheless, the school knows that further fine-tuning to planning, delivery, assessment and intervention strategies are required to eliminate the inconsistencies that remain in teaching and subject performance if all groups of students are to make at least good progress. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, despite the good provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders. Safeguarding arrangements are also satisfactory. Behaviour is good and students say they feel safe, although on occasion at social times the standards can slip. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed by this inclusive school. Some good partnerships, such as the one with the Royal Shakespeare Company, enrich students' learning and well-being significantly.

The large majority of parents and carers are happy with the school's work. Of the small minority that are not, inspectors investigated, and found only a little evidence to support concerns about behaviour. The impact of new leaders and managers is good and growing as they blend the best of existing practice with a fresh perspective and key strategic enhancements to working practices, organisational culture and the learning ethos. However, the school accepts that more needs to be done to ensure all aspects of the school's work, including all policies, procedures and systems are always high-quality. Governance is satisfactory but improving rapidly as members of the governing body become more adept at using their expertise and experiences to influence leaders at all levels to improve the impact of their work. The school's insightful leadership; strong academic track record for most students; good contribution to students' personal development and well-being and some effective provision, are evidence of good capacity for sustained improvement. This is underpinned by accurate self-evaluation.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve all students' attainment and achievement, especially those groups of students who have historically performed less well, such as students known to be eligible for free school meals, students with a statement of special educational needs and less-able students by:
 - ensuring learning and progress is at least good for all groups of students in all subjects relative to their starting points and capabilities
 - ensuring procedures to identify and support any underperforming students or students at risk of doing so are timely and highly effective so that they can recover any lost ground in their learning quickly or stay on track
 - ensuring the most-able students reach their potential by always gaining the A* and A grades of which they are capable.
- Further improve the impact of teaching on all students' learning by:
 - systematically sharing and embedding the most effective planning, delivery and assessment practice throughout the school
 - ensuring lessons are always interesting, sharply focused on accelerating students' learning and consistently well-matched to the differing needs of all students, including more- and less-able students
 - eradicating the remaining variability in teaching and subject performance.
- Further improve the quality, robustness and consistency of whole-school and departmental policies, systems and structures by:
 - leaders establishing more regular and rigorous tracking and review procedures that ensure all aspects of the school's work is high quality
 - the governing body ensuring its monitoring systems enable governors to routinely check that all policies, requirements and agreed practices are being scrupulously adhered to and/or applied consistently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students are inquisitive, articulate and confident. They collaborate well, and can concentrate for long periods. They recognise and value that teachers possess the expertise to help them and play their part by working hard and focusing on what they need to do to develop their understanding, improve their knowledge and hone their skills effectively. The very large majority of students' attainments by the end of Year 11 are well above national averages, including most Black and minority ethnic students. This represents good achievement when set against their starting points on entry to the school which are above average. Specialist subject targets, and targets for the percentage of students gaining five A*-C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics were surpassed in 2010. However, the small minority of students known to be eligible for free school meals, students with a statement of special educational needs and less-able students underperformed. A couple of subjects, notably psychology, also performed poorly, and not enough of the most-able students gained the highest grades. The impact of the school's provision has not been good enough to ensure that these groups and

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subjects consistently reach or exceed their targets. Encouragingly, inspection evidence and data from the school's robust tracking systems show that currently, all students, including those that have historically underperformed, are making good progress.

Students feel safe and their behaviour is mostly good, with few recorded incidents. Although, standards can slip at social times and a small amount of graffiti, choice language and more boisterous activity was evident on occasion. Contributions to the school and wider community life by students, and their awareness and take-up of healthy lifestyles, are good. They organise events for charity, act as reading buddies for younger students and participate wholeheartedly in the range of music, drama and sporting opportunities available to them. They took particular pride in telling inspectors about their contributions to the production and recent performance of King Lear in conjunction with partner primary schools and the Royal Shakespeare Company. These events were covered by the community's Two Valleys Radio Station which is supported by students and the governing body. Most students develop a good range of academic, vocational and personal skills, alongside business and enterprise, and work-related learning experiences, which will aid them in the future. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is effectively promoted by the curriculum, assemblies and visitors. Students are reflective, socially mature, morally and culturally informed and show consideration towards those students with autistic spectrum disorders who are well integrated into school life. Attendance is average but improving strongly for all year groups, as a result of effective strategies employed by the school.

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 | 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 |
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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How effective is the provision?

The impact of teaching on learning is good for the very large majority of students, sometimes it is outstanding. Staff are talented and diligent. In the lessons observed, teaching was most effective when staff utilised their excellent subject knowledge, effective planning and charismatic, inter-personal skills, together with a range of engaging and focused approaches to learning, which captured students' imagination and accelerated their learning. Discussion-based learning was used effectively. For example, in science where Key Stage 3 students debated the advantages and disadvantages of genetically modified crops. Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a good contribution to targeted students' learning. Less effective aspects observed included the inconsistencies in planning, delivery and assessment practice in some subjects, and an insufficiently tailored approach to students' specific needs. The use of assessment to support students' learning is mostly good. However, the school knows that procedures to identify and support underperforming students or those at risk of doing so would benefit from further improvement.

A review of provision has resulted in a more broad and balanced range of options for learning through the curriculum, with the specialism influential in increasing subject choices and partnership working. The good curriculum now offers a wide range of academic, more vocational and work-related courses ranging from GCSE Latin to a diploma in construction or equine management. This customising of provision better meets the needs of students unsuited to or uninterested in a traditionally academic route. This is supplemented by a host of enrichment activities, such as foreign travel, field trips to the moors, cultural events and days where the timetable is suspended and students immerse themselves in a theme, such as the Civil War and Yorkshire Days. Specialist provision for students with autistic spectrum disorders is strong.

The care, guidance and support students receive are satisfactory. This is based on an inclusive and caring ethos, and positive relationships between students and staff. A strength is the support and guidance provided to students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including some looked-after children and students who have become disaffected, which ensures they are retained in education and progress successfully. The advice and guidance students receive as they move through and leave the school are sound. This allows them to make informed choices about their futures. As a result, very few are not in education, employment or training after they leave school. An inhibiting factor is the lack of rigour and some inconsistency in the quality of some record keeping, practice, monitoring, and evaluation procedures.

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 | 3 |

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How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher and the mostly new leadership team are forward thinking, astute and strategic in their thinking. Honest and frank evaluation has identified a mis-match between the school's current position and the shared ambition of being an outstanding school. Key actions taken to raise attainment and achievement; clarify roles and responsibilities at all levels; and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of provision, signal leaders' good impact in embedding ambition and driving further improvement. The management of teaching and learning is also good, although chances are missed to share and embed best practice systematically, and to remove remaining inconsistencies. Even so, training, mentoring, monitoring and evaluation strategies have raised the proportion of good and outstanding teaching. Members of the governing body fulfil their duties satisfactorily, and although more needs to be done their influence is growing as they deploy their expertise and experiences more strategically. This is starting to enable them to scrutinise, monitor and challenge leaders' work and the school's effectiveness scrupulously.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is currently satisfactory but improving as recent innovations, such as the parent portal and parent forum become embedded. The school has brokered some good partnerships which very much enhance students' learning and well-being. These include meaningful partner school, curriculum, community, and student support service links. The school's inclusive nature and the emerging narrowing of the gap between different groups of students' academic performance show how the school effectively promotes equality and challenges discrimination. Community cohesion is well promoted by the curriculum, assemblies, visits and visitors. Students' interrelate positively and are developing a good awareness of faith groups, cultures and communities that are distinctly different to their own. This is helping students at this largely mono-culture school to understand that they are part of a global community beyond Honley.

Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. Safe practice is well-integrated into the curriculum which ensures that students understand how to keep themselves and others safe. The school accepts that in order for this aspect to be regarded more highly they need to adopt best practice in relation to record-keeping, risk assessment and site security. Value for money is good because resources are well deployed to ensure outcomes for the very large majority of individuals and groups, and the quality of provision, are mostly good. Financial management is sound.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| 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

Most parents and carers who expressed their views in the questionnaire are happy with their children's experience at school. They believe that teaching is good at the school and that their children are kept safe. Almost all agree that the school meets their children's particular needs. However, a small minority of parents and carers questioned the extent to which the school takes account of their concerns and suggestions; how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour; and the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning. Inspectors investigated these concerns, and found a little evidence to support concerns about students' behaviour. A small minority of students also disagreed that behaviour was good and indicated there was some bullying. The school have refined the behaviour policy and strengthened further their procedures for dealing with such incidents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Honley 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 261 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1262 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 72 | 28 | 172 | 66 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 70 | 27 | 172 | 66 | 12 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 75 | 29 | 156 | 60 | 24 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 83 | 32 | 162 | 62 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 62 | 24 | 185 | 71 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 49 | 19 | 157 | 60 | 44 | 17 | 3 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 26 | 10 | 191 | 73 | 35 | 13 | 2 | 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) | 76 | 29 | 153 | 59 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 71 | 27 | 169 | 65 | 13 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 46 | 18 | 147 | 56 | 44 | 17 | 8 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 32 | 12 | 165 | 63 | 32 | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 50 | 19 | 182 | 70 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 87 | 33 | 160 | 61 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 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 | 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.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Honley High School, Holmfirth, HD9 6QJ

Thank you for the courtesy you showed inspectors when we visited recently. We learned a lot from observing your lessons and talking with some of you. We also read with interest the views you, your parents and carers expressed in the questionnaires.

After evaluating the evidence we concluded that the school provides you with a good education. The very large majority of you make good progress and your attainment is well above average – well done! Your success reflects the good teaching, effective curriculum and appropriate support and guidance you receive. However, for a few of you the impact of these provisions is not fully apparent and you have underachieved. We also believe more of you should be gaining the highest grades in your GCSE's. Your behaviour is good and you feel safe but a few of you let yourselves down on occasion. You participate in school and community life wholeheartedly, whether it is performing at the Marsden Jazz Festival or playing for the school. You should also be really proud of your Passion for Fashion Fair Trade and Human Rights day regional award. Your moral, spiritual, social and cultural development is good and you come across as mature, informed and responsible young people. The school has developed some good partnerships, such as the one with the Royal Shakespeare Company that culminated in your recent production of King Lear. We think your school's specialist status contributes significantly to raising standards and developing close links with your partner primary schools and the local community. The new headteacher and his senior team are working effectively on your behalf. Governors are ambitious and committed. But further improvement is needed in several areas before your school can claim to be outstanding in the educational experience it offers you.

In order for the school to improve further we have asked staff to: raise achievement, particularly those of you who usually perform less well; improve the impact of teaching on learning, particularly in subjects performing less well; and improve the quality and consistency of school and department policies, systems and structures.

You can all play your part by continuing to work hard and attending school regularly.

Yours sincerely

John Young

Her Majesty's Inspector

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