

Hazel Grove High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106137
Local Authority	Stockport
Inspection number	355893
Inspection dates	8–9 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Harrison HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1071
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Keith Harrington
Headteacher	Ms Joanne Nolan
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. They observed 38 lessons, delivered by 33 teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including department self-assessments, the school development plan and 144 parental questionnaires, as well as questionnaires from students.

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

- The impact of initiatives to improve teaching and learning.
- The progress of different groups of students.
- The rigour of self-assessment by leaders and managers.

Information about the school

Hazel Grove is a slightly larger-than-average comprehensive school. Numbers in the school have fallen in recent years in line with demographic trends in the local authority. In 2010, the school enrolled a significant number of new students into Years 8 and 9 due to the proposed closure of a local secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is rising, but remains below average. The majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased since the last inspection; it is average overall but a higher-than-average proportion of these students have a statement of special educational needs. The school houses a local authority designated resource base for 19 students with severe learning difficulties. Hazel Grove has specialist status in technology with lead subjects in mathematics, science and technology.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is an improving school with a number of good features. It is satisfactory overall due to the lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. In half the lessons observed students made good progress, in others progress was satisfactory but students were not reaching their full potential. Initiatives in place to spread good practice in teaching are starting to address this issue. Levels of attainment have fluctuated in recent years but are generally above average. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above average. The majority of students enjoy school, behave well and show respect for others. They contribute well to the life of the school and the local community and gain a wide range of skills to help them when they leave school.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly and provides a good range of learning opportunities. Support for students is good. The school invests significant resources in this aspect of its work and pastoral support is strong. Students like the new house system and are clear about how they access additional support. The school is very effective at identifying vulnerable students and works well with external agencies to support them. This is an inclusive school, which strives hard to help all learners. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those with a statement of special educational needs and those in the resource base benefit from good curriculum planning and teaching to meet their needs, as well as effective specialist support. As a result, they make good progress. Assessment to support learning in lessons is improving, but marking does not consistently indicate what students need to do to improve.

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the school, which is shared by staff. A culture of rigorous target-setting and accountability is developing in the school, supported by appropriate training for managers at all levels. Based on the school's clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development and sound action plans, there is good capacity to bring about further improvement. The majority of parents and carers are positive about their child's experience. Community cohesion is promoted well in the school and within the local community, but there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn about other cultures in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons where students make good progress by:
 - ensuring there is an appropriate level of challenge for different learners in the class

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- making sure teachers undertake sufficient checks on students' understanding during the lesson.
- Improve the consistency in the quality and frequency of marking to ensure students receive sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve further.
- Increase opportunities for students to develop their knowledge and understanding of other cultures in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are slightly above average. They make good progress in some lessons and satisfactory progress overall. Behaviour is good in the majority of lessons and around the school. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Most students enjoy coming to school and they have a positive attitude to learning in the lessons that provide sufficient stimulus and opportunities for involvement. In other lessons, students lose interest and progress is limited. They work steadily and acquire sufficient knowledge and skills but, in these lessons, they show little enthusiasm and do not always reach their full potential because of a lack of sufficient challenge. Overall, girls have made better progress than boys, but strategies are in place to narrow the gap, for example, a group of Year 11 boys attended a local fitness centre for intensive revision sessions, combined with sporting opportunities. These strategies are proving effective in the current Year 11 where inspectors found no difference in the progress made by boys and girls. The majority of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress at the school.

Students acquire good work-related skills, including their ability to use information and communication technology (ICT), make presentations and work together in teams. They contribute well to the life of the school and the wider community. They willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example, as mentors to younger students and as members of the school council, and help out at local primary schools. Students influence school policies, such as the revised rewards and sanctions system, and manage a budget to improve facilities, including the new student social area. They get on well together and show respect for others. However, their understanding of different cultures is limited. The majority of students have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and many participate in sports and fitness activities.

Levels of attainment have fluctuated in recent years but are generally above average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was significantly above average in 2008 but around average the following year. In 2010 it was six percentage points above the national average. Data for the current year, including results from examinations taken in November, indicate students are on track to make continuing improvements for their 2011 examination results.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teachers are becoming more skilful at using methods to involve students more in lessons and to check their understanding. Inspectors found good practice in half of the lessons they observed and a few examples of outstanding teaching. The school's specialism has benefited classes across the whole school, with many teachers using ICT effectively in lessons. There are few inadequate lessons. However, there are still too many lessons that are satisfactory rather than good. These lessons are characterised by a lack of challenge, with teachers not taking enough account of different needs in the group, and insufficient checking of the students' understanding. Students are well behaved in the majority of lessons but, in the satisfactory lessons, they are compliant rather than enthusiastic and do not achieve to their full potential. In a small number of lessons, students do not pay sufficient attention. In the good lessons, students are enthusiastic and work hard, they respond well when given opportunities to answer questions, to work in groups and think for themselves.

Assessment to support learning is satisfactory. Teachers increasingly check students' prior knowledge at the start of lessons and use a variety of methods during the lesson to aid their progress. This includes helping students to understand the criteria for achievement at different levels, and involving them in assessing their own work and that of their peers. However, there are inconsistencies in the frequency of marking students' work and in the

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quality and regularity of marking. In some cases, students do not receive sufficient feedback to help them understand what they need to do to improve further.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly and is well matched to the needs of students. Changes are made each year in line with the identified needs of different cohorts. For example, extra provision is in place in the current Year 7 to boost literacy and numeracy skills. The placement of students in appropriate groups is particularly well organised, with careful thought given to their aptitude in different subjects. The curriculum for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities provides a very good balance between specialist sessions in the dedicated resource centre and participation in mainstream school classes. Opportunities for students to develop their ICT skills are well embedded across the whole school. Tutor periods and 'skills for life' sessions promote students' good personal development. Students benefit from a wide range of courses and qualifications. Partnership work with other providers, such as the local further education college, enables the school to offer a good range of vocational, as well as academic, subjects. Effective links with local employers help students to develop work-related skills. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

The school has invested significant resources since the last inspection to improve further its care, guidance and support systems. Pastoral support is particularly strong and has been highly effective in increasing levels of attendance and reducing exclusions. The school identifies quickly students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and works effectively with external agencies to provide additional support. Students are very positive about the new house system and are clear who to approach if they have problems or need extra help. They appreciate the mentor system set up by the school. Specialist support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities contributes to the good progress they make. Target-setting for individual students has improved since the last inspection, and a range of interventions are in place to support students at risk of underachieving. In some cases, this has been effective and these students are now achieving in line with their ability. Guidance to support academic progress is satisfactory, but has been adversely affected by staff absences. Transition arrangements into Year 7 are effective and support is in place to help students settle in who enter the school at a later stage. Advice and guidance to support students in their choices after leaving school are thorough and effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

This school shows a real drive for improvement that is evident in investment to bring about a more attractive learning environment and ensure a good level of support for students. This has had a major impact on driving up attendance and reducing exclusions. The headteacher and senior leaders are bringing about a changed culture in the school, one that focuses on more ambitious targets and high levels of accountability. The school has a good understanding of what constitutes good teaching and learning, and staff development programmes to increase the proportion of good or better lessons are in place. These have been successful in developing staff confidence in using a wider range of teaching methods, but have not yet shifted the focus of teaching sufficiently on to the extent that students are making enough progress in lessons to ensure that they reach their full potential. Changes to clarify management responsibilities and the restructuring of departments since the last inspection are well focused to support the drive for further improvement across the school. Staff and managers at all levels are clear about the areas for development and appropriate plans are in place.

The governing body provides a good balance between support for the school and challenge for senior leaders. They are clear about the areas for further improvement. Effective partnerships with a range of organisations are used well to inform curriculum development and student support systems. Links with parents and carers are extensive and the majority are positive about their experience of contacts with the school. The school has in place satisfactory safeguarding arrangements.

Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and respect for others is promoted well. The school monitors carefully the performance of different groups of students. Strategies to narrow the gap between the progress made by boys and girls are starting to be effective especially in Year 11, but it is too early to see a sustained trend across the school. Community cohesion is strong within the school and with the local community, but there are insufficient opportunities for students to learn about other cultures.

Budgets are well managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The school's specialism has had a positive impact on the quality of provision and work with partners. Examples include extensive work with employers, an initiative to encourage girls into engineering, and work with other schools on computer-aided design.

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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	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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire feel that their children enjoy school and are making good progress. Inspection evidence confirmed levels of attainment to be above average, but also indicated that there is too much variability in the progress students make in different lessons. A minority of parents and carers have concerns about behaviour and the extent to which the school takes account of their concerns or suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hazel Grove 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1071 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	24	90	63	8	6	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	34	24	101	70	6	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	28	89	62	5	3	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	22	92	64	12	8	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	14	96	67	15	10	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	16	94	65	19	13	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	10	88	61	23	16	4	3
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)	18	13	95	66	11	8	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	17	96	67	10	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	19	84	58	17	12	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	11	88	61	16	11	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	23	16	84	58	17	12	6	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	24	88	61	11	8	5	3

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



13 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Hazel Grove High School, Stockport, SK7 5JX

As you know, we recently inspected your school and I am writing to tell you about our findings. Thank you for helping us to find our way around and telling us your views about the school.

We judge Hazel Grove to be a satisfactory and improving school, which has a number of good features. We saw that the majority of you behave well and attend regularly, and that examination results are generally above average. In lessons, the majority of you work hard and in some classes you participate well and show enthusiasm for the subject.

However, some lessons do not fully engage your interest or and teachers do not always check your understanding and, as a result, your progress is more limited. We think you participate well in school life outside lessons, get on well with each other and show respect for others, but we would like you to gain more understanding of other cultures. We agree with you that the school provides a good curriculum and strong support for students, and that you acquire a good range of skills to help you when you leave school. The school is well led and managed and we judge it has good capacity to make further improvements.

In particular, we have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure you are all challenged in lessons and that teachers check on your understanding during the lesson
- ensure that marking of your work is frequent and gives you enough guidance on what you have to do to improve further
- help you to increase your understanding of people from other cultures in the United Kingdom and overseas.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Harrison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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