

Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135073
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	373150
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2011
Reporting inspector	John Peckham HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1760
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	550
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Glover
Headteacher	Declan Jones (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
School address	Pepys Road London SE14 5SF
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. A total of 42 part lessons in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 to 4 were observed, taught by 42 teachers. It was not possible to view sixth form lessons as Year 12 students were undertaking work experience at the time of the inspection. Year 11 and Year 13 students had completed their courses and were no longer in school. Meetings were held with groups of pupils and students, staff and parents. Individual meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors observed the college's daily routines, examined a range of sixth form work, scrutinised policies, records of assessment and the college's self-evaluation procedures. The first day of the inspection included the college prize-giving ceremony and an afternoon performance by Year 5 and 6 pupils to all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Inspectors also took into account the questionnaire responses from 260 parents, 136 pupils in Key Stage 2, 65 students in Key Stage 3 and 4, and 71 members of the college staff.

The inspection looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The background to the fall in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 results in 2010.
- The extent to which the college curriculum meets the needs of all its pupils and students.
- The effectiveness of the college's engagement with parents and carers.
- The effectiveness of the college's procedures for evaluating the quality of learning at all stages.
- The effectiveness with which the college has adapted to offering all-age provision.

Information about the school

Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College is much larger than most secondary schools. In 2008, it incorporated a local primary school and now caters for all ages from 3 to 19. Following a fire at the primary school site in 2010, it is temporarily based on three sites instead of the normal four. Nursery provision is located in a nearby church hall. The college is part of the Haberdashers' Aske's Federation and shares a governing body with two other local academies. A new chief executive of the federation has recently been appointed.

The proportion of pupils and students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is much higher than average, as is the proportion of students whose first language is other than English. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average, but the overall proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is the same as in most schools. The college has a specialism in music and shares with the other academies in the federation, a specialism in information and communication technology. Since September 2009, it has also been a training school. The college holds the Investors in People award, the Sportsmark, Artsmark Gold and the Investor in Careers award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

An outstanding commitment to the care, education and personal development of every child and young person attending the college creates a quite distinct and exceptional ethos at Hatcham. Within its safe and supportive environment, children and young people are able to grow and flourish. There is a long tradition of staff going to sometimes extraordinary lengths to support individuals through particular difficulties or to enable them to catch up on missed learning. Children and young people are helped to raise their aspirations and broaden their horizons. A range of activities and trips provide many enrichment opportunities and the college's music specialism offers an outstanding facility. As one parent put it: 'People who live in my part of London can't believe that my son plays the clarinet, performs in an opera and does the Duke of Edinburgh Award!' There is also a strong sense of moral purpose across the college, apparent in the highly responsible way in which pupils and students conduct themselves around the college.

Changes to the admissions process mean that students in Key Stages 3 and 4 now have a broader range of prior attainment than in previous years. It is partly because of this that, although most students continued to make good progress, the GCSE results in 2010 were lower than in previous years. The college has, however, introduced some highly flexible provision within the curriculum for Year 11 this year. There are plans to provide more intensive support for those students who are finding it hard to achieve five GCSEs including English and mathematics. Leaders expect the GCSE results to improve in 2011.

The college has managed extraordinarily well the disastrous fire at Easter in 2010 which destroyed the primary buildings. Pupils are now taught on the two secondary campuses in classrooms that have been specially adapted. Key Stage 1 and 2 results in 2010 dipped, partly as a result of the disruption, but have more than recovered in 2011. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, part of which is in a nursery located nearby, has improved significantly in the last year. Children have access to a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment that is well resourced. They develop their social and communication skills well. The sixth form is a real strength of the college, offering high-quality teaching, personalised tutoring and a wealth of opportunities to extend study and interests beyond advanced level courses.

The college Principal and the senior leadership are ambitious and focused on monitoring the overall attainment of students. Insufficient use is made of this data, however, to enable close monitoring of progress in subjects, or for groups of pupils or students. While most students are clear about their targets and current attainment, they find it much more difficult to describe exactly how they can improve.

There are committed and very able leaders and managers across the college. They have implemented good initiatives such as peer mentoring, the Year 11 email bulletin and professional development in the use of assessment for learning. Their hard work,

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however, has had insufficient impact because it is not effectively linked into whole-college improvement planning. The college's systems for measuring its own performance lack refinement and rigour and are sometimes overgenerous. The Principal and his senior team have, however, successfully managed substantial reorganisation in recent years, sustained or improved high outcomes for students and supported other schools within the Haberdashers' Federation. The quick recovery from the effects of the recent fire has also been impressive. As a result, the college's capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop better processes for self-evaluation at all levels, so that a range of techniques are being regularly used by governors, leaders and managers to evaluate the work of and plan improvement for the college, including:
 - better line management of leaders and managers to ensure consistency, depth and rigour
 - extension of the use of tailored professional development to improve the quality of teaching and learning, based on analysis of lesson observation and work scrutiny
 - integration of the views from staff, pupils and students and their parents and carers, into departmental and whole-college evaluation and development planning
 - sharper links between subject, year, phase and whole-college development planning.
- Ensure better use of assessment data so that:
 - students can understand more clearly their progress and know how to improve
 - teaching is more appropriately matched to the needs of all students
 - leaders can more frequently and efficiently monitor overall progress, and that of groups, in each subject.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The vast majority of pupils and students have strong aspirations; they attend well, enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. Attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is below average, but pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage, their results in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. At Key Stage 2, the picture has been more variable with a dip in attainment in 2010 followed by significant improvement in the 2011 results. On entry to Key Stage 2, these children's attainment was below average so their progress is also good. Pupils from other primary schools join the college in Year 7 and the prior attainment of those completing Key Stage 4 in 2010 was above average. Their results at GCSE were significantly above average in most areas, meaning that their progress was good.

In lessons observed by inspectors, pupils and students were enthusiastic and positive about their learning and in most cases they make good or even exceptional progress. Students talk warmly about teachers' passion for their subjects and how, in many lessons, the work is accurately pitched to suit their ability. Most students, however, can also

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describe some lessons where this is not the case. Learning activity is not always suitably adapted to match the needs of all pupils or students. The school's behaviour policy is not always consistently applied by all teachers.

Overall, pupils and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, particularly those with a statement of special educational needs, make good progress. They are well supported, teaching assistants are appropriately deployed and there is good evidence of the college making considerable efforts, for example to ensure that a hospitalised and subsequently disabled student kept up with his work. Not all teachers, however, are yet sufficiently skilled in adapting learning to suit children and young people with milder learning difficulties who do not have in-class support. The college has taken positive action to promote the achievement of students from all backgrounds, such as through the Black and Afro-Caribbean writing project in Key Stage 2. As a result, there is no significant difference in attainment between the outcomes for different groups.

The college provides some excellent opportunities for pupils and students to take on responsibility and contribute to the school and the community, for example through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, as members of the college council, or as prefects or mentors for younger year groups. The college effectively promotes healthy lifestyles and, quite exceptionally, provides an effective programme to enhance overall well-being, including mental health, through the curriculum. Students are positive about the education and guidance they receive in relation to risks beyond college. While the majority of behaviour observed by inspectors was exemplary, where teaching is less good behaviour can quickly deteriorate. This was a concern for some pupils and students and for their parents or carers.

Pupils and students demonstrate their outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development across the college. For example, in a Year 8 assembly held on 7 July in remembrance of victims of the London bombing, students led a tribute which included a beautiful unaccompanied song composed and sung by one of the students. All students participated with strong empathy and were able to reflect with maturity on the transient nature of life.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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?

There is much exceptionally good teaching. Most teachers in the secondary phase have a very strong subject knowledge and inspire students with a passion for learning. Planning is effective and ensures that most students can make good progress, although there is sometimes insufficient allowance made for the full range of ability in each class. The college has focused on developing the skills of teachers in using assessment to monitor the progress of students in lessons, but practice is still variable. The college has identified a small proportion of teaching that is inadequate. In the secondary phase, most students only occasionally experience this, but where teaching is less good at Key Stage 1 or 2, it has a much bigger impact on the children affected.

Inspectors observed some excellent practice in the marking of work, often with helpful comments and pointers for improvement. There is, however, considerable variation between teachers and between different phases and subjects. Not all marking helps pupils or students to measure their progress towards targets or is precise about the ways in which work can be improved. There are some significant strengths in assessment practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in some subjects such as technology, but the variability and lack of consistency across the college limits the overall impact. Whole-college assessment data is collected frequently and analysed thoroughly for senior leaders and the governing body.

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Middle leaders, however, are not using this data as effectively as they could, to measure the progress of groups within subjects or to shape intervention and support.

The care, guidance and support available to children and young people are a real strength of the college. There is a deep commitment to enabling all to achieve at least five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, which sets, for some students, highly ambitious targets. The college is still developing ways in which to provide the tailored academic support and guidance that will help to achieve this goal. Students speak with warmth and confidence about the willingness of staff to provide additional help and parents and carers have offered several examples of this. The college's work with outside agencies to engage young people in purposeful activity and to provide targeted support is excellent. Case studies indicate that this work has been highly effective in enabling some young people with particularly difficult circumstances to complete their education successfully. The college extends its responsibility to do its best to ensure successful transition for all, either into the sixth form or to appropriate college or vocational programmes.

The specialism in music provides a vibrant core to the overall work of the college. A proportion of each year group are selected on the basis of musical ability, creating a pool of gifted young musicians. The inspirational director of music has drawn together a team of staff and volunteers who can not only nurture this talent, but also involve many other students so that music is an integral part of the college experience. The federation specialism of ICT is also well embedded across the college, enabling all current Year 9 students to obtain a GCSE equivalent qualification.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The ambitions of the governing body and senior leaders to secure high attainment for pupils and students are clear and in some cases extremely demanding. At a strategic level, the college's actions in supporting other schools and taking on a primary school in very challenging circumstances are commendable. There is evidence that drawing other schools into the Haberdashers' influence has had a powerful, positive impact on the lives of many young people in the locality. The senior team is relentless in striving to ensure the very best outcomes for all students, but there is insufficient precision in the way in which this vision is communicated to all members of the college community. As a result, not all staff are confident that they are making a valued contribution to the college's work. Improvement planning processes lack detail and the impact of initiatives is not evaluated with sufficient frequency or rigour. Where, for example, subject leaders are developing

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self-evaluation and planning for their departments, the format and quality is variable. Good practice, such as the development planning in mathematics, is not being effectively shared across the college as a whole.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning have been identified by the college as areas for improvement and new appointments have been made to the senior leadership team. The college has been able to use its programme of lesson observations to devise actions that bring about improvement. Inspectors found it difficult, however, to establish the college's own current, overall picture of teaching quality. Coordination of the actions of middle and senior leaders to improve the quality of teaching is not sufficiently close or systematic.

The governing body is exceptionally able and, as the federation governing body, highly strategic with a reliance on college leaders for operational matters. Financial management is strong and governors fulfil their statutory requirements effectively. Data presented to the Hatcham Liaison Committee enables them to gain a good grasp of a range of the college's work, but a lack of comparative data, either year-on-year or nationally referenced, limits their ability to hold the college to account.

The college has implemented a range of measures to ensure good safeguarding of pupils and students and appropriate checks are made before appointment of staff. Much of the work to ensure equality of opportunity for children and young people is exemplary, at the core of the care offered by the college. Leaders do not, however, adequately monitor the participation of all groups in extra-curricular activity. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the social, ethnic and religious context of the community and have encouraged a range of national and international links so that the impact of the college in promoting community cohesion is outstanding.

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Following the difficulties created by the relocation of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, rapid progress has been made in establishing a welcoming and stimulating environment and a good variety and quality of resources that inspire children to learn and flourish in their personal development. There is an effective balance between adult-led activity to provide strong foundations for learning and child-initiated activity that builds independence and decision-making skills. The planning for teacher-led sessions, however, does not always take sufficient account of the needs of individual children. Adults effectively show children the behaviour and attitudes they need to develop so that children are able to build a good sense of responsibility, self-reliance and confidence. Parents and carers are well supported, for example through the recent work explaining how play enhances learning.

Children reaching the end of the Reception Year in 2011 started nursery with skills that were below those expected for their ages in communication, language and literacy and similar to those expected for other skills. They have now built these skills to be above average in most areas, making good progress overall and outstanding progress in communication, language and literacy. Outcomes are not yet outstanding because good progress has not been sustained for more than one year and it is less strong in the Nursery Year. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage promote a happy, harmonious and cohesive environment with strong teamwork. That improvements have been made despite the 2010 fire is commendable. Leadership of this stage is not yet fully integrated into the whole-college leadership.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

The Hatcham sixth form is a major strength of the college. Students make good progress at A level and AS level, and the college's data indicates that further improvements are likely in 2011. There is little variation between the performance of different subjects in the sixth form. Tight monitoring of progress provides rapid and targeted support for students who fall behind. All sixth form students mentor younger members of the college community; they set high standards of behaviour and provide strong role models. Although inspectors were unable to observe it, teaching is described by sixth form students as the best that they have experienced. Deep subject knowledge inspires students and extends high attainers. Thorough, frequent assessment and informative marking of work ensure that students know how to improve.

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The curriculum offers a broad choice of academic and vocational routes, including a popular elite scientist option. Courses are available on the Hatcham site and, through the shared sixth form, across the federation. Leaders communicate high ambition and work together effectively as a team to evaluate outcomes and provision. They correctly identify where improvements are needed and make them. They have effectively broadened the curriculum as the student intake across the federation has broadened. They recognise that their systems lack some of the efficiency which could be provided through sharply-focused plans, associated evaluations and more regular syntheses of data by subject, showing students' progress against targets overall and that of groups.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

Around 15% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these the overwhelming majority were very happy with the experience of their children in the college. They report that their children enjoy school and feel very safe. Of those who wrote written comments, many were positive. Concerns came into three broad categories: behaviour; a small proportion of inadequate teaching; and frustrations over communication. Inspectors' views on the behaviour and quality of teaching are included in the text of the report. Communication issues were sometimes individual, but also included frustrations about out-of-date information (such as the 2009 examination results) on the college website and difficulty negotiating the switchboard. Inspectors have shared these concerns with the college.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the college.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the college. The inspection team received 260 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1760 pupils registered at the college.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	117	45	135	52	5	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	114	44	136	53	6	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	117	45	128	49	13	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	119	46	118	46	20	8	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	105	41	138	53	11	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	79	31	138	53	32	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	26	151	58	29	11	0	0
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)	86	33	140	54	13	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	30	147	57	22	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	84	32	131	51	28	11	5	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	26	147	57	25	10	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	106	41	124	48	17	7	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	126	49	120	46	8	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	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.



8 July 2011

Dear Children, Pupils and Students

Inspection of Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College, London, SE14 5SF

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your college recently. We are particularly grateful to the students who gave up their time to speak to us and to those of you who completed the questionnaire. We found your views especially helpful in getting a full picture of the college.

Your school is outstanding and offers excellent opportunities for all age groups. Most of you feel very safe at the college and enjoy your learning. We were especially impressed by the excellent musical education available to you and the extent to which teachers and other staff of the college try to make sure you can all do as well as possible. Most of the teaching is excellent, but like you, the college is aware of a small proportion that is not good enough. We believe that the Principal and his senior team have managed the disruption caused by the fire on the primary school site very well. We were very pleased by your behaviour around the college, and listened to your concerns regarding the occasions when you think behaviour is less good.

To help the college improve further, we have asked leaders to focus on the following priorities:

- improve the ways in which they measure the life and work of the college
- make better use of assessment so that you and your teachers can plan better how to improve your work.

Congratulations on your part in creating the wonderful learning environment at Hatcham. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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