

Hinchley Wood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125316
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	381075
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Meena Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Trust
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,150
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Fudge
Headteacher	Steve Poole
Date of previous school inspection	24 April 2007
School address	Claygate Lane Hinchley Wood Esher KT10 0AQ
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 46 lessons, observed 35 teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, leaders and managers, teaching staff, students and parents. They carried out a number of joint observations of lessons with the school's senior managers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan and departmental reviews, a range of school policies, local authority reviews, internal teaching and learning observations, students' work, assessment of work in English, questionnaires from 295 parents and carers, student questionnaires and staff questionnaires.

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

- Whether teaching and assessment practice are sufficiently tailored to the needs of different ability groups, in particular, for more-able students.
- The learning, progress and behaviour of students in lessons.
- The consistency of outcomes for students across core subjects and key stages.
- The capacity of the senior leadership and governors in relation to accelerating students' progress and achievement, and maintaining an improving trend in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Hinchley Wood School is a large secondary school with specialist status in music and is a Trust school. A small number of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The number with a statement of special educational needs is also low. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The main ethnic minority group is White European and a much smaller proportion of students are Indian. The number of students at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language is very low. Low numbers of students are known to be eligible for free school meals.

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

Hinchley Wood School is an outstanding school with a good sixth form. As one parent reported, '...the school is a credit to the community and cares about individual children and their happiness'. The students work exceptionally well together in this harmonious and cohesive community and achieve outstanding outcomes. This is as a result of the good teaching they receive, excellent interventions for those who underachieve and a well-structured curriculum with some innovative aspects. Personalised vocational and academic pathways, resulting from the school's strong partnerships, effectively meet students' needs and aspirations. The outstanding specialist curriculum in music has had a significant impact on raising achievement.

Additionally, excellent care, guidance and support and detailed tracking of students' progress ensure that all students are on track to achieve their potential. The school excels in its care and education of significant numbers of vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All students feel highly valued and safe. They display courteous and respectful behaviour towards each other and towards adults, demonstrating high levels of maturity and good leadership qualities. This results in exemplary attitudes to learning. When given the opportunities in lessons, many work successfully as independent learners and make outstanding progress. Attendance is high and punctuality excellent, as the vast majority of students are highly motivated and enjoy school greatly.

Most teachers take careful note of students' levels when planning activities and tasks, and this helps ensure that, in the majority of cases, students make good and outstanding progress. This is especially the case in mathematics, music, religious education and science. There are great strengths and some exemplary practice in assessment across all subjects, but also some inconsistency in teachers' planning of activities and tasks relevant to students' needs, as well as in the checking of all students' learning and the quality of feedback on their work. Insufficient account is sometimes taken of the needs of students of higher ability, and in a small minority of cases, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A robust focus on self-evaluation at all levels of the organisation and an ethos of continuous improvement through detailed monitoring of teaching are key factors in the school's success in raising standards. The headteacher has been inspirational in leading his management team, and is supported very effectively by the strong governing body. This has led to the school fostering a highly positive ethos of behaviour for learning and achievement. This is notably the case in the sixth form,

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where students' achievement and the overall effectiveness of the provision at the time of the last inspection were satisfactory, but are now good. Changes in key staff, although having a positive impact on standards, have very recently taken place, and are yet to become embedded. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve at this stage is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of teaching and assessment across all key stages and subjects by May 2012 through:
 - greater checking of all students' learning during lessons and consistently providing detailed feedback on students' work
 - ensuring learning activities and tasks are consistently well suited to students and create challenge for all students, especially those of higher ability and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Given the overall above-average starting points of Year 11 students in 2011, they made always at least good and frequently outstanding progress across a range of subjects and 79% of these attained five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, in their GCSE examinations. The vast majority of high-attaining and middle-attaining students made outstanding progress by surpassing their predicted levels of progress. The minority of students who were White European and Indian made good progress. Students' progress in mathematics was outstanding and in English, good. Notably, the majority of students in receipt of free schools meals made good progress in English. The school has worked effectively with students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and ensured that there has been a significant trend of improvement in their progress and attainment in English and mathematics over the last three years. According to school data, current Year 11 students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good and often outstanding progress towards their targets. Moreover, the sharp focus that school leaders have on the attainment of boys as a potentially underachieving group is beginning to reduce the gap in attainment for this group, this year.

In a large number of lessons observed by inspectors, students were highly motivated, responsive to well-structured tasks, took responsibility for their learning, and visibly enjoyed learning. Students with moderate learning difficulties and those with behavioural emotional and social difficulties receive excellent out-of-class support, and overall make outstanding progress. However, in a minority of lessons, owing to insufficient planning of tasks to fully meet their needs, the progress some students make is more variable.

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Structured learning opportunities contribute to students’ strong sense of moral and spiritual values as they are prepared to consider others' points of view and reassess their own beliefs. For instance, in religious education lessons, learning for life days and assemblies, students were observed to offer heartfelt and mature responses to ethical issues. Structured learning and extra-curricular opportunities contribute well to broadening students’ social and cultural horizons and developing a strong sense of community. Restorative justice and conflict resolution are conducted in a mature manner by students. A number participate in the sustainability group and have influenced positive initiatives, for instance, contributions to the school farm and water fountains in the playground. Through opportunities in the music and art curriculum, students appreciate diversity and respond well to different cultural traditions and values. The school’s national awards for International Dimension and the Green Flag are in recognition of this excellent work.

Levels of participation in sporting activities are good and students have a good awareness of the importance of a healthy diet. The school is working on promoting an even more varied menu, in particular, for those students who are vegetarian. The quality of students’ work experiences is high, as demonstrated through employer feedback, and they display the responsible attitudes and excellent aptitudes they need to equip them for further education and the world of work.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

In a large majority of lessons, learning activities are planned carefully to take into account students' levels and abilities within the subject. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and excellent classroom management skills and use these to inspire learning very effectively. Learning support assistants and student peers are deployed highly effectively and teachers use skilful open questioning to check and extend students' learning. In one outstanding Year 8 science lesson, sixth form students modelled working with microscopes. This enabled younger students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to fully understand best practice and safety implications.

Assessment is good, with excellent examples of careful planning for students that extends the learning of all students in line with their levels, and enables self-evaluation through peer-assessment activities. The majority receive good feedback and know what they need to do to improve on their grades. However, the school recognises that inconsistencies exist in the marking and checking of all students' learning and is working to ensure that all teachers plan sufficiently well to challenge all groups of students, and improve the quality of feedback they receive.

Through the school's partnerships within the Trust, a wide range of high quality and appropriate learning opportunities are provided for students off site, for instance, an engineering diploma. An emotional literacy skills based course meets the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in Key Stage 3. Team building skills are in place for students in Key Stage 4, whose circumstances render them vulnerable, as part of a Leading Edge Partnership. The school's highly successful Year 7 'Thinking Smart Curriculum' was profiled nationally as an example of good practice. These initiatives, through demonstrating the school's belief that students should aim high, have resulted in outstanding outcomes overall.

The music and computing specialist status has had significant impact through a variety of cross-curricular projects and the development of a virtual learning environment.

Excellent arrangements for transition from primary school ensure students make a good start to their education. All students benefit from wider learning experiences through citizenship skills. The attendance and progress of all students and, in particular, vulnerable students at risk of non-attendance and those who underachieve, are rigorously tracked by personal tutors. Excellent home/school liaison, along with sustained contact with a range of services, ensures timely and well-targeted support for students facing challenging circumstances. Students in Years 9 and 11 receive excellent advice and guidance on subject choices. Parents and carers are kept well informed through the website, receiving regular reports on their children's progress. The vast majority of students move on to training, work-based learning, college- or school-based courses at 16.

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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?

Through the headteacher's outstanding leadership and excellent management of his staff, the school has successfully improved students' achievement and consolidated a strong behaviour for learning culture. One parent observed his leadership as 'inspirational' and commented that the 'management team continually strives to improve and have a calm and authoritative influence'.

Managers work cohesively as a team, sharing the core values of ensuring success in students' academic studies and their personal development and well-being. The school's accurate self-evaluation process is indicative of its collaborative approach and wholehearted commitment to improvement, as well as to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities. It includes high levels of support and challenge from the governing body. For instance, individual governors promote equalities through actions that tackle homophobia, supporting middle leaders in reviewing achievement of all groups of learners and through undertaking lesson observations. They rigorously monitor safer recruitment practice and consequently, safeguarding procedures are highly robust across all aspects of the provision.

The school's self-evaluation gives a highly effective account of its strengths and the areas where it needs to improve. Departmental plans fully reflect this analytical approach, based on evidence from internal lesson observations, work scrutiny and learning walks. A notable strength is the induction of new staff and the guidance given to staff on assessment procedures and good teaching practice. However, systematic assessment and management practice across subjects is not fully in place. The school is addressing this issue through its development plans.

Strong support for parents and carers exists through the school's website and email messaging. Termly drop-in meetings organised by the governors provide a forum for parental concerns and promote a stronger voice for all parents in the education and care of their children; but these are not always well attended. The school's promotion of community cohesion across all three strands is good, but less developed in respect to students' awareness of the diversity of school populations.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Sixth form

A recently strengthened focus by managers has resulted in greater consistency and rigour in tutorial practice and assessment procedures. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and students' progress has improved. Students' attendance and punctuality have improved significantly. Outcomes for sixth form students in 2011 were good, as A level and AS standards were just above national averages. Inspectors observed in lessons that the majority of students entering the sixth form with broadly average levels of GCSE attainment make good progress, relative to their starting points. School data predict that these students are on track to attain significantly above national average results for AS and A levels in 2012. Academic guidance has improved greatly in the last year, as students review their personal learning targets and progress with tutors more consistently and receive highly valued support and feedback. Progression to higher education for students on A level courses is high and a good number are accepted by their first choice of university for their chosen study.

The quality of teaching is good and is characterised by excellent teacher subject knowledge, but opportunities for students to work collaboratively, to reflect deeply and develop higher-order thinking skills are limited in some instances. Nevertheless, the vast majority of students demonstrate a sense of self-direction and ambition and report that they greatly enjoy their learning.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are very happy with the education received by their children, and acknowledge especially the good transition arrangements with primary schools. Inspectors found school/home communications to be mainly good, as the majority of parents and carers believed they were very well informed about their children’s progress and the school supported them in helping their children learn. A very small minority voiced concerns about their children being placed in English sets that were incompatible with their levels and target grades. A minority expressed concerns at the quality of communication from staff regarding their children’s progress.

Inspectors found some evidence to support concerns relating to setting in English, which the school is addressing. Other than through discussions with parents, carers and the questionnaires, inspectors did not find further evidence to support concerns regarding home/school communication.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hinchley Wood 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 295 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	137	46	138	47	16	5	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	146	49	143	48	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	101	34	146	49	24	8	5	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	113	38	139	47	26	9	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	108	37	164	56	8	3	1	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	78	26	159	54	39	13	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	22	187	63	26	9	3	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)	111	38	143	48	13	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	105	36	149	51	27	9	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	122	41	141	48	13	4	4	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	80	27	167	57	18	6	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	157	53	120	41	8	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	155	53	125	42	7	2	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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.



23 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Hinchley Wood School, Esher, KT10 0AQ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and were impressed by how polite and courteous you were and your excellent attitudes towards your learning. We judged that your school is outstanding.

Congratulations to all of you for your excellent attendance and the exemplary punctuality and behaviour that we observed in lessons and around the school. This has helped you gain success in your studies. Most of you make outstanding progress in your learning and attain above-average standards in GCSE examinations. In a large majority of lessons, teachers plan tasks and activities sufficiently well to extend your learning and check your progress, but in a minority of lessons, this is not the case. However, if you are not making the progress you should, the school is very quick at providing you with excellent subject support and guidance outside lessons. The care, guidance and support you receive are outstanding. The school has put in place appropriate courses that help you progress in your studies, in particular for those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are many stimulating extra-curricular opportunities that help you achieve success in your studies and develop as responsible and caring citizens. The school provides you with excellent advice and guidance that prepares you very well for the next stages in your learning and life. Many of you stay on in the sixth form, where you achieve good outcomes on A level courses and progress to higher education or further training, in line with your aspirations.

To help the school improve further, we have asked senior leaders to do the following.

- Ensure that teachers plan consistently appropriate and challenging activities and tasks in line with your abilities, check your learning and progress during lessons and provide effective feedback, so that all of you achieve your potential.

We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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