

# Hall Green School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103556
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	376931
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philippa Francis HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	N/A
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	901
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	N/A
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jayne Owen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Greaney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Southam Road Hall Green Birmingham B28 0AA
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	27–28 September 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 31 lessons taught by 31 teachers and another three teachers in shorter visits to classrooms. They held meetings with students, the Chair of the Governing Body, senior managers and teachers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's data showing examination results for 2011, development plans, school policies and lesson observation records. Inspectors considered questionnaires from 541 parents and carers, 150 students and 41 staff.

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

- How well do students make progress in English and mathematics?
- How effective are middle managers in using assessment data to evaluate provision and inform actions for improvement?
- How effective are teachers at providing challenge in lessons for more-able students?

## Information about the school

Hall Green is similar in size to an average-sized secondary school. It has held specialist arts college status since 2006. The school has a designated resource base for students with physical disabilities; currently, 34 students with physical disabilities attend the school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The very large majority of students are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion for whom English is not their first language is considerably higher than average. A higher proportion of students than average has special educational needs and/or disabilities.

**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

Hall Green is a welcoming, friendly and good school. Students feel safe and well cared for; they achieve well because of good teaching and high levels of support. The considerable and well-established expertise in supporting students with physical disabilities to achieve is notable. Students' achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, has improved markedly since the last inspection, including the achievement of different groups of students. Students' examination results are above average. Students develop in confidence, gaining useful life and work-related skills which help almost all of them to move on highly positively in their next steps in education or employment. Students from a range of different ethnic heritages work harmoniously and highly productively because of the excellent grounding they receive in learning how to respect each other and work together.

The large majority of lessons are good or better. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that their strategies match students' needs; strategies are mostly successful, although teachers sometimes miss opportunities to provide a high level of challenge for the most-able students. Learning in lessons is often of high quality but, in a small minority of lessons, teachers over-direct activities and do not make students think for themselves. Students' needs and interests are met well by the curriculum. Carefully planned developments have broadened option choices alongside maintaining a strong focus on core subjects. Support for students at risk of underperforming is put in place promptly and is highly effective. Individual learning plans for students with special educational needs, however, are often over general.

The headteacher and senior managers provide strong and effective leadership with a clear focus on raising standards, as shown by the much improved results. The headteacher's clarity of vision, combined with rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring, give the school good capacity to improve further. Senior managers have helped middle managers to become confident and skilled in using assessment data and taking successful action for improvement. Particularly effective action has been taken to close the gap between boys' and girls' achievement, illustrating the school's good promotion of equality. However, the leadership of work to develop provision for students with English as an additional language has been less strong.

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

- Increase the effectiveness of provision for students with additional needs by:
  - strengthening the strategic leadership of provision for students with

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- English as an additional language, improving the arrangements for initial analysis of their needs and ensuring that initiatives to support their learning are fully evaluated
- ensuring that individual learning plans for students with special educational needs are tailored specifically to each individual.
- Raise the achievement of more-able students by ensuring teachers maximise opportunities to challenge and extend students’ learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Inspectors observed consistently good learning and progress in the large majority of lessons observed. This confirmed students’ good progress as shown by comparing their broadly average starting points when joining the school to their consistently above average results at the end of Key Stage 4. The percentage of students who gain more than five good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics has risen since the last inspection at a higher rate than nationally and is above average. However, the percentage of students achieving the highest grades of A\* or A is broadly average.

Most students concentrate well and work hard; they are rarely distracted. Students use information and communication technology skills well and show creativity in many elements of their work, such as in drawing and design activities and in enterprise projects including working with both local and national businesses.

Actions to reduce variations between the achievements of different groups of students have proved largely successful. The gap between boys’ and girls’ achievement has narrowed considerably and middle ability students’ achievement has improved from previous underperformance. Students with special educational needs, particularly those with physical disabilities, achieve well.

Students’ behaviour around the school is almost always exemplary despite having to move around and work in sometimes cramped accommodation. Students’ attitudes to learning are nearly always good; instances of disruptive behaviour are very rare. However, occasionally in lessons there is a tendency for a few students to become passive, particularly if teachers are directing them too much. Physical exercise is an important feature in students’ life and good education helps them to understand the importance of being healthy. Participation in sport and fitness activities is high. Students make a strong contribution to school life and the local community. The student council is becoming an influential forum and doing good work in tackling important matters such as promoting students’ perspective on learning to teachers.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

**Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning**

**2**

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

## How effective is the provision?

Managers use lesson observations to evaluate the quality of teaching very effectively. Inspectors' judgements about the quality of lessons closely matched the school's judgements. Teachers use a wide range of effective teaching strategies in lessons. They are increasingly confident in trying new approaches alongside tried and tested methods to involve students in their learning, which they enjoy. A good example is the development of a small plot of land as a land-based resource and its use for practical activities across a range of subjects. Teachers question students frequently to check their understanding, but do not always stretch more-able students by seeking fuller or more complex answers.

Assessment is used well to support learning. Marking and providing feedback are becoming increasingly consistent in quality; inspectors noted exemplary practice in several subjects, including design and technology and history. A particular focus on making sure students record their response to improvement points is proving effective in helping them to improve their work.

The curriculum has been carefully developed to meet students' needs and abilities, including making good use of the arts specialism to promote creativity wherever possible. Students are guided well and appreciate the choice available. Good partnership work has helped development of vocational courses which had increased the extent to which the curriculum matches individual needs. Development of the foundation curriculum is working well to support relevant ability groups. The recent implementation of a cross-curricular literacy plan is providing necessary strengthening of this aspect because the number of students with specific literacy needs has increased. Development of the curriculum to support students for whom

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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English is an additional language is less well structured across the school. Extra-curricular activities cover a broad range of interests and participation is high.

Year group managers combine the provision of good pastoral care along with close monitoring of students’ academic performance to support students in every way. Students, parents and carers speak highly of the impact of their work. Staff work with a wide range of external agencies to provide additional support for students with particular needs. Support for students with physical disabilities is very good; for example, weekly visits by physiotherapists take place. Students’ attendance is monitored closely and has improved considerably; punctuality is now accurately measured because of the introduction of an electronic registration system. A few of the systems that underpin provision for students with special educational needs are being rightly reviewed to ensure they are fully effective, for example, clarifying the codes used for recording students’ needs on teachers’ tracking sheets.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team is experienced and leads by example. Middle managers work well together and sharing of good practice is promoted. Assessment data and challenging targets are used well to drive improvements. The analysis of students’ results is thorough and leads to clear action points, including for different groups of students. Close and detailed monitoring of the impact of actions takes place. Evaluation of impact of provision for students for whom English is an additional language is less well developed. Governors provide a strong and sensible steer in support of the school’s values. They are well informed about the school’s effectiveness and keep a close watch on performance. The school’s engagement with parents and carers is good, as shown in the high response rate to the inspection questionnaire and attendance at parents’ evenings.

Equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school’s work. Students with physical disabilities work alongside their peers; discrimination is not tolerated. Instances of bullying or racism are rare. Gaps in achievement are mostly closing, and managers are good at identifying variations in performance and putting in place actions to tackle these.

Safeguarding arrangements are robust. Site security has been improved and arrangements for checks on visitors to the school are very thorough. Risk

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assessments are thorough and comprehensive arrangements, such as individual evacuation plans, are in place to ensure the safety of students with physical disabilities. The school is a focal point in the local community and has worked successfully to promote good community cohesion through a wide range of initiatives and by forging strong links with external organisations. However, a few aspects of the underpinning analysis are underdeveloped.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

The response rate from parents and carers was very high. The responses show a very high level of agreement with most of the statements. In particular, most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the school keep their children safe and almost all respondents agreed that their children enjoy school. Parents’ and carers’ expressed less satisfaction with the way in which the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors investigated this thoroughly and found evidence that supported the good grade awarded for this outcome. However, they judged that the school had not done enough to canvass parents’ and carers’ views about this aspect so that actions could be taken to resolve any particular concerns.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hall Green 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 541 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 901 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	227	43	296	55	8	1	2	0
The school keeps my child safe	245	46	275	51	12	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	155	29	308	58	42	8	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	162	30	318	60	22	4	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	175	33	326	61	14	3	2	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	142	27	310	58	54	10	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	103	19	315	59	91	17	4	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)	173	32	297	56	26	5	1	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	161	30	321	60	23	4	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	197	37	279	52	40	7	7	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	122	23	318	60	43	8	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	188	35	312	58	13	2	4	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	222	42	292	55	12	2	5	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	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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

29 September 2011

Dear Students



### **Inspection of Hall Green School, Birmingham, B28 0AA**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. We judged your school to be good in its overall effectiveness. The results achieved by students at the end of Year 11 are consistently above average and we could see from lesson observations and looking at assessment records that most of you are making good progress in your learning. You work hard and your behaviour is good. The school's work to help you gain the skills and confidence in your next steps in education or employment is outstanding, as is its work in helping your personal, social and cultural development.

Teaching is good and assessment is thorough. In a small minority of lessons, teachers direct you too much and do not make you think for yourselves. Sometimes, those of you who are more able are not challenged enough in lessons. We have asked the school to improve this. The curriculum includes a good range of choice and plenty of popular extra-curricular activities. You are cared for well and given prompt help if there is any risk that you may fall behind in your studies. Those of you with additional needs receive good help and support; however, the targets on individual learning plans are often too general and this is also something we have identified for action. In addition, the provision to help those of you for whom English is an additional language needs further development and better evaluation. We have also asked managers to make improvements here.

Your school is well led and managed. Actions for improvement are successful and the headteacher and managers are very experienced at evaluating the school's work and knowing what needs to be done to improve. We are impressed by the work of the Learning Council and all that students do to contribute to the local community through charitable work and other initiatives. Well done.

Yours sincerely

Philippa Francis  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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