

Hindley High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106528
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377420
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Sally Kenyon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	895
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	S Shaw
Headteacher	J Lees
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 29 teachers in 32 lessons and held meetings with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, scrutinised a sample of students' books and considered the responses from 318 parental questionnaires.

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

- Is cross-curricular literacy being used effectively to raise attainment in English?
- Are the most able students sufficiently challenged in lessons to facilitate good or better progress?
- How effectively does the curriculum allow all students to achieve five A* to C GCSE grades, including in English and mathematics?
- How rigorously do leaders and managers at all levels track, monitor and review progress?

Information about the school

Hindley High School is a smaller than average sized secondary school. The school has specialist status for visual arts, music and information and communication technology (ICT). The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The overwhelming majority of students have English as a first language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Since 2006 the school has had a resourced unit for students with complex medical difficulties and currently has five students in this provision.

The school has many awards including Artsmark Gold, National ICT Mark, Geography Quality mark, DfE immersion school for officers and staff, Sports Mark and Football Charter Mark and Healthy School status. The school is a National Professional Qualification for Headship Leadership Development School.

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

Hindley High is a good school and many aspects of the school's work are outstanding. When asked about their view of the school, one parent commented, 'I couldn't ask for more, my son loves going to school and has improved so much since coming to Hindley High.'

Students make good progress from their below average starting points and leave with average attainment. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs and the few with complex medical needs, make outstanding progress due to high quality teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Many students enter the school with below average reading ages, some significantly so, which has a considerable impact on their overall achievement. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics was below the national average for 2011. However, the school is relentless in its drive to improve literacy skills across the curriculum and, as a result, forecasts are for above average GCSE results in 2012.

A broad range of literacy interventions are currently used including one-to-one tuition by specially trained staff, the use of classroom resources, such as key-word sheets and many more. While some highly effective use of these strategies was seen to accelerate progress in lessons, in others interventions were used less seamlessly and progress stalled. Some good examples of cross-curricular numeracy were seen but this is not as developed as the literacy programme. The school has made great efforts to engage parents and carers in a programme where they can learn numeracy alongside their children in order to effectively support their out-of-school learning.

The school ensures that students of all abilities are integrated well into school life. Bespoke care is provided for many groups of students through a range of agencies working in highly effective partnerships starting with transition work for some students in Year 5. One parent commented, 'there is outstanding counselling available for students at the school' and another commented that her son has a 'wonderful head of year, very pleasant and approachable.'

Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community ably led by the head boy, head girl, prefects and the 80-strong 'student voice'. Students are confident ambassadors for their school and local community and regularly invite

more senior members of the community in for 'dawn patrol', an opportunity to have some light refreshments, chat and play games. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding and tutor time is now being used very purposefully to explore ethical questions and a variety of topical issues such as human rights.

The quality of teaching is good with a few satisfactory lessons seen and a small minority of outstanding practice. The strongest teaching is characterised by well-paced lessons, extended opportunities for independent learning supported by the firmly embedded use of assessment information in planning work. In these lessons, students often respond with outstanding behaviour and are rewarded with lots of appropriate praise and encouragement. Many good examples of diagnostic feedback were seen in books giving students levels for their work and specific feedback so they know how to improve. Likewise in some lessons, effective verbal feedback from teachers allowed students to make good progress. Some strong examples of peer and self-assessment were also seen in lessons and in books. However, not all books are marked to an equally high standard and opportunities are missed to provide good feedback to students both in lessons and through marking.

The school's specialism of visual arts, music and ICT is having a positive impact on raising achievement, particularly through the use of ICT and by creating engaging learning experiences in the personal development days where students created a huge banner for the school dining room and developed a piece of music for the school's annual and prestigious 'Morny Awards'.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders at all levels are involved in school improvement planning and rigorous self-evaluation. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvements in raising levels of attendance and reducing persistent absence. All of these factors demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding as is the way that the school engages with parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics by:
 - consolidating teachers' good practice in written and verbal feedback to enable students to improve their work
 - sharing outstanding practice in independent learning
 - embedding literacy and numeracy strategies across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The attainment of students on entry varies greatly from year to year. The cohort starting Year 7 in 2011 had low attainment whereas the current Year 11 was broadly average. The school has revised its target setting during the last academic year to ensure that targets set for all students are suitably challenging. It tracks the progress students make with subject leaders working in partnership with heads of year. Swift

interventions are put in place for groups identified as underachieving. Students make good progress due to the good quality teaching they receive. A learning walk through Year 11 English classes showed some outstanding progress being made by the most able students, as a result of excellent planning for independent learning and good use of challenging questions to enhance progress. Students were successfully analysing poetry to identify different techniques used, such as rhyming couplets, applying skills they had acquired in the previous lesson. Progress is weaker in lessons where too much time is dominated by the teacher, and so there are too few opportunities for independent learning. Learning also slows where there is a lack of pace and challenge and assessment information is not used effectively in planning lessons which meet the needs of all students.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This was seen in a Year 11 resistant materials class where students used a wide variety of tools, including hand saws and power tools to create their own bird box. Students worked independently with complex equipment, and with a very high regard for safety. Students were clearly very proud of their creations and the skills learnt prepare them well for the world of work.

Most of the students who responded to the survey feel that behaviour is good at school and, as a result, almost all students say that they feel safe in school. Many staff have been trained in ensuring internet safety and the school offers safety advice to parents and carers through its newsletter. The very large majority of behaviour seen in lessons was good with a small minority outstanding.

Students adopt healthy lifestyles well and many partake in extra-curricular sporting activities. Attendance is above average and the proportion of students who are persistently absent has significantly reduced since the previous inspection due to the successfully targeted actions of staff. Attendance remains low for a few students, however, the school is taking swift and effective action to further improve it. The school prepares students well for their future economic well-being, resulting in almost all going on to further education, employment or training.

A wealth of opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, are exploited by the school. Students raise money for Children in Need and send gifts abroad through Operation Christmas Child. They also take part in a wide variety of educational visits, including to a Buddhist temple and a Holocaust memorial centre. Students also have regular contact with schools in France and Nigeria exchanging cultural ideas and experiences. The school runs an innovative adult community learning programme where members of the local community can learn to make jewellery, tiaras and cards. Adults can also opt for cake decorating or help with interview preparation or writing a curriculum vitae.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3

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

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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good, as is the use of assessment to support learning. However, variations remain in these two areas both within and between departments. In an outstanding biology lesson about genetics, students took part in highly engaging group work from which they have to produce a presentation. Some of the most able students were nominated as group leaders to take charge of the learning ensuring that all groups of students made outstanding progress. The teacher used challenging questions to identify any misconceptions and pick up on key learning points and students knew at what level their work was and how to improve it. In a Year 7 art lesson, students created their own interpretations of Picasso. All students were engaged by their work showing their ability to work independently using a range of techniques. Teaching becomes less effective when teachers continually intervene by addressing the whole class or when they give too little time for tasks to be completed. Where teaching was satisfactory, there was a lack of active engagement in learning, a slower pace and sometimes a lack of challenge.

The curriculum is good and offers a well-organised and effective range of options particularly at Key Stage 4. Care is taken to ensure that those taking vocational qualifications do not miss work in English, mathematics and science. However, in Key Stage 3, some students are withdrawn from non-core subjects on a temporary basis for literacy and numeracy interventions, which affects their progress in these subjects. The specialism provides some very creative option choices including fine art and digital photography. The school places high priority on ICT and every student takes the double GCSE option. A successful programme for more academically able students allows them to visit a highly ranked university to raise their aspirations to go on to further education. The school's own vocational centre provides some students with a strong foundation for continuing on to apprenticeships and other courses.

Care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school's ethos of 'excellence, relevance, access.' The very large majority of students who responded to the survey say they feel adults in the school care about them. A few parents and carers commented about the smooth transition from primary school and the high quality induction students receive when transferring to the school mid-year. Students report that they receive strong careers guidance and feel confident in taking their next steps.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the leadership team are ambitious for the school and highly committed in their pursuit of continually raising achievement. Sharply-focussed improvement plans are monitored regularly by leaders at all levels. Middle leaders welcome the support and challenge they receive from senior leaders and the governing body. Middle leaders make a significant contribution to self-evaluation and are responsible for closely monitoring and tracking progress. Standards are systematically monitored, evaluated and reviewed by the senior team who carefully moderate and seek evidence for the judgements made.

The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. The school has a broadly accurate picture of teaching, however, some of the school's judgements on the quality of teaching were over-generous. All staff who responded to the survey felt that the school made appropriate provision for their professional development which has rightly focussed, for example, on the use of assessment to support learning. The school runs much in-house training to develop the many and varied skills of their highly committed staff.

The school provides good value for money and deploys resources strategically. The governing body are passionately committed to the school. They regularly seek the views of parents and carers and offer appropriate challenge to senior leaders in acting as a supportive but critical friend.

Most parents and carers who responded to the survey feel that the school takes account of their views. The school provides many and varied opportunities for parents and carers to learn about their child's progress and effectively support them. The school has highly effective systems to communicate with parents and carers including newsletters, a website and text messages. The school has been most effective in developing a dedicated pastoral team to build meaningful relationships with some families to improve attendance and raise achievement.

The school is a cohesive community and creates good opportunities for students to experience lifestyles different to their own. The school promotes equal opportunities well and, although there are gaps in attainment for some groups, these are closing. Safeguarding arrangements are outstanding, partly due to the strength of partnerships to promote learning and well-being. There are highly effective relationships with primary schools, a local children's centre, the police, health awareness agencies and the British Heart Foundation.

These are the grades for the 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	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	2
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	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the survey feel that: the school is effectively led and managed; it helps them support their child's learning; their child's particular needs are met and that; their child enjoys school. Almost all parents and carers who responded feel their child is making enough progress, that teaching is good and that the school helps their child be safe. A few comments were received about bullying, healthy eating and care, guidance and support. All of these were followed up with the school and inspectors are satisfied that behaviour is well managed, good options for healthy eating are available and strong policies and that strong procedures are in place regarding care, guidance and support.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hindley 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 318 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 893 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	33	199	63	8	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	156	50	154	49	4	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	153	49	155	49	7	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	135	43	175	56	2	1	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	144	46	168	53	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	112	36	180	57	21	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	26	201	64	27	9	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	106	34	182	58	8	3	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	117	37	186	59	9	3	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	147	47	157	50	9	3	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	91	29	192	61	19	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	136	43	165	52	4	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	152	48	155	49	5	2	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	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 is 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).

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.



7 December 2011

Dear Students,

Inspection of Hindley High School, Wigan WN2 4LG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school earlier this month. We really appreciate the time you spent in meetings with us telling us about your learning and what you do to make a difference. It is clear that you are very proud of your school and you give up your time to help others both in school and the wider community. All of your contributions through the meetings and questionnaires were taken into account and helped us in coming to our final judgements.

Here is what we found.

- You go to a good school and many aspects of your school's work are outstanding.
- Your behaviour and achievement are good.
- You make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community.
- Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Teaching and assessment are good.

We have asked your school to increase the number of students who leave the school with five A* to C GCSEs including English and mathematics by ensuring that all teachers give you specific feedback on how to improve your work both in lessons and in your books. We have also asked the school to continue its work in providing good opportunities for you to improve literacy and numeracy across different subjects and to create more opportunities for you all to learn independently.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Kenyon
Her Majesty's Inspector

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