

Hetton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108862
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	377834
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Farrow HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	819
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Wilkinson
Headteacher	Phil Keay
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2009
School address	North Road Hetton-le-Hole Houghton le Spring DH5 9JZ
Telephone number	0191 5536756
Fax number	0191 5536760
Email address	hetton.school@schools.sunderland.gov.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Farrow

David Selby

Clive Petts

Mark Patton

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Seconded Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching in thirty nine part-lessons; eight of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school's development plans, records on the quality of teaching and information on students' current progress in lessons. The inspection team analysed responses to inspection questionnaires returned by staff, a sample of students, and the very small number, 59, returned by parents and carers. One parent also provided views of the school by telephone. Some parents and carers made additional comments in their questionnaires. Comments were reported to the headteacher where the confidentiality of the parent or carer would not be compromised.

Information about the school

Hetton is a slightly smaller-than-average sized secondary school and the number of students on roll has fallen since the last inspection. Virtually all students come from White British communities. An above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion has increased significantly since 2009. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has an enhanced language support provision for 10 students from across the local authority area with a statement of special educational needs for speech, language or communication difficulties. This contributes to the higher-than-average proportion of students with such a statement.

A new headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2010 and a new assistant headteacher in September 2011. The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations of attainment and progress.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- Hetton is a satisfactory school. It is improving quickly but is not good yet because, although the leadership of teaching has improved significantly, it needs to be strengthened further; the quality of teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure all students make the best possible progress in lessons. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory and improving. The proportion of students gaining five GCSEs, including English and mathematics, improved well in 2011 and was slightly above average. Inspection evidence shows that most groups of students make steady progress in lessons. Students in the enhanced language provision make good progress because of the good quality teaching, care and support provided.
- An increasing proportion of teaching is good as a result of leaders' focus on improving it. However, a significant minority remains satisfactory which results in students making satisfactory rather than good progress in these lessons. Teachers' assess students' achievements regularly but some do not use this information well enough to match lesson activities to their different starting points.
- Behaviour is satisfactory and students' attitudes to learning are similarly so. Students are polite and friendly. They say they feel safe and were seen to behave well around school, at break times and in the dining hall. However, in a minority of lessons, the school's behaviour management policy is inconsistently applied. When this occurs, the low-level misbehaviour of a few impacts on the learning of others.
- Since their appointment the senior team have taken decisive action to manage the school's performance more rigorously and tackle the many areas in need of improvement. This work is making a positive difference to the quality of teaching, the curriculum and to students' progress in lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Hasten the pace of improvement in teaching to improve the rate of progress students make in their lessons by:
 - ensuring all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what their students can achieve
 - ensuring teachers' regular assessment information about students' current achievement is always used to plan and deliver interesting activities that are consistently challenging and well-matched to students' individual starting points
 - increasing opportunities for students to actively participate in lessons, and develop their independent enquiry and collaborative skills
 - embedding the good practice in marking, written guidance, oral feedback and insightful questioning used by some teachers consistently across all.

- Improving the leadership and management of teaching and learning by:
 - sharpening improvement planning success criteria so that middle leaders and staff are held to account robustly for the impact of actions on students' achievements
 - increasing middle leaders' involvement in the school's overarching self-evaluation process, including the evaluation of the impact of their own and their teams' work, in driving improvement in teaching and students' progress
 - ensuring all teachers, including supply teachers, apply the school's behaviour management policy consistently.

Main Report

Achievement of students

Building on the 2011 improvements in the proportion of students in Year 11 gaining five GCSEs grade A*-C including English and mathematics, current assessments that include examination results already attained, indicate that results will improve further in 2012. However in 2011, students' progress from their average attainment on entry into the school was inadequate, particularly for boys, students known to be eligible to free school meals and those requiring additional actions to support their special educational needs or disability. Improvement strategies developed by senior leaders upon their appointment did not have time to tackle the longstanding underachievement of these groups. Assessment data and examination results already secured show many more current Year 11 students are making expected progress, including the groups identified above.

Lesson observations, students' assessment information and scrutiny of students' books show that students are making generally satisfactory progress in their lessons and some are making good progress. This is in part due to improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The gap between the progress of disabled students or those who have special educational needs, those known to be eligible for free school meals, boys and other students is narrowing effectively across all year groups and particularly so in Year 7.

A good range of strategies have been developed to improve students' reading, literacy and communication skills and the proportion attaining an A-C grade in English GCSE improved

from below average in 2010 to average in 2011. This is helping to prepare them effectively for their next steps and a higher than average proportion of students enter education, employment or training when they leave school. Recent initiatives hastening improvement include regular reading for pleasure sessions, twice weekly tutor reading time and the development of a literacy champion for all subjects.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is satisfactory, including for disabled students or those with special educational needs who are taught in the main school. It is good for students attending the enhanced language support provision. Teaching is improving and an increasing proportion is good; a small proportion is outstanding. Such teaching is typified by good relationships between students and teachers, and students themselves. These teachers are enthusiastic, confident, with good subject knowledge and have translated leaders' high expectations of teaching into reality. Varied tasks, well-matched to students' interests and abilities alongside a brisk pace, engage and interest them and ensure they make rapid progress during their time in class. Incisive marking and feedback leaves students in no doubt about how well they are doing and what they must do to reach their next level. Opportunities to develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are capitalised upon well, through interesting topics as well as perceptive questioning that draws students into lively ethical or moral debates. This was seen in a lesson on the holocaust and one on prejudice and discrimination. Such lessons and others in design and technology, media studies and physical education provide good examples of students working enthusiastically and respectfully whether independently or cooperatively in pairs or groups.

However, these positive features are not embedded in all teaching. There is still too much that is satisfactory and where teachers' expectations are not high enough. Sometimes teachers spend too much time talking, limiting opportunities for students to participate actively and activities are mundane. Lessons are not planned precisely enough to move students on briskly from their individual starting points and while students generally display positive attitudes in lessons, they make only satisfactory progress.

Despite improvements in teaching, through training and sharing good practice, in a small minority of lessons observed, students' progress is hampered by the low-level disruption of a minority. These observations resonate with similar concerns expressed by some students. Parent and carer responses to the inspection questionnaire were very low, but some also reflected this concern. A few also think their children are not making good progress and the report above confirms that students make generally satisfactory rather than good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' behaviour is generally good when they move around the school site and at social occasions, such as break and lunch times. They act responsibly and safely and, like the majority of parents and carers, report that they feel safe. No student has been permanently excluded for two years and the number subject to a fixed-period exclusion has fallen well. However, because of the misbehaviour of a small minority of students in a few lessons and their impact on other students' progress and learning, and because of the similar concerns reported by some students and parents and carers, behaviour is judged satisfactory overall. Since September a behaviour management policy with rewards as well as sanctions has helped to improve behaviour and some students recognise this improvement. A few

teachers have yet to use this policy consistently and some students have yet to embrace their own role in this policy. This is limiting its full impact.

Since his appointment the headteacher has taken decisive action to improve students' attendance, with some success. Attendance rates have improved significantly and, although still slightly below average, the gap between the school's attendance rates and the national average is narrowing well. The proportion of students persistently absent has decreased considerably, particularly boys, and this is contributing to their better progress in lessons.

Students report that good actions are taken to tackle racist and other types of harassment or bullying and state that incidents are rare. The school has developed some innovative child exploitation and anti-bullying strategies and these are helping to raise awareness and keep students safe. Students state confidently that there is someone to talk to in times of need or when they have a concern, including a range of support staff peer mentors, peer mediators or indeed the local police officer attached to the community.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. While there has been clear improvement in students' progress, the quality of teaching and attendance and reduction in exclusions, leaders know there is still more to do to ensure teaching, achievement and behaviour of all students is consistently good. Given the improvements made already, the school has satisfactory capacity to continue its improvement. Significant curriculum changes are becoming embedded and ensuring that students' needs and interests are being better met. This is helping to improve attendance rates and hasten progress. Middle managers speak of a step change since the appointment of the senior leadership team, including a much sharper focus on strong performance management arrangements and use of continual professional development opportunities to help drive improvement. They share the ambition to raise achievement by improving the quality of teaching and learning and the vision of respect, learn, achieve. However, a few teachers have yet to embrace this vision fully.

A rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluating the school's work involves middle leaders who value their increased involvement and accountability in driving the school's improvement. They have yet to be fully involved in the school's overarching self-evaluation process. From detailed evaluation of the school's work, focused action plans have been developed to drive improvement and these are monitored regularly. However, success criteria are not always sharp enough to ensure staff are held to account fully for the actions identified or for students' progress in lessons and over time. Robust, regular systems for tracking students' progress are being embedded. The information is being well-used to target interventions and additional support for students at risk of underachievement. However, some teachers are not using the information successfully enough in their lesson planning and delivery.

The role of the governing body has improved since the last inspection and, through good scrutiny of data and information, it both supports and challenges the leadership team effectively. The governing body rigorously ensures that all safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. It works with leaders to make sure all students are equally included into the life of the school and tackles discrimination robustly. For example, the school secures charitable funding so students do not miss out on special visits and checks regularly the achievements of different groups. However, because students' progress is satisfactory overall, then inspectors judge equality and diversity similarly.

Leaders have taken a range of steps to develop a stronger partnership with parents and carers. Detailed newsletters are sent half-termly and a school magazine termly and a quarterly parent forum set up that all parents and carers can attend. Regular student reports keep them informed of their children's progress. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done and feel the low response rate to the inspection questionnaire endorses this. They also recognise the development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development needs embedding further in some lessons. However, a strong range of enrichment activities, assemblies, anti-bullying work, students' roles in supporting their peers, their respect for the school environment and a range of visits, including international visits, are improving students' development in these areas effectively.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Hetton School, Houghton le Spring DH5 9JZ

Thank you for welcoming me and the inspection team so well when we visited your school. I would like to add a special thank you to all of you who spoke to us during the two days and those of you who completed the inspection questionnaire. We have taken account of your views and those of your parents and carers who responded to their questionnaire when making our judgements.

We judge Hetton to be a satisfactory school. We have not judged it good because, although things are improving since the appointment of your new headteacher and you are now attaining standards that are similar to students nationally, you are making generally satisfactory progress in your lessons rather than good. This is mainly because not all teaching is consistently good and we have judged teaching to be satisfactory overall. We have provided your headteacher and governing body with a range of recommendations to help them make sure that all teaching is as good as the teaching you report to be good or better and the lessons that we observed to be just like that. You behave well around school, in the dining hall and at break times and found you to be polite, friendly and generally caring of one another. However, in a few lessons we saw, and as some of you and your parents and carers told us, the misbehaviour of a few students sometimes impacts on your work so we have judged behaviour to be satisfactory. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that the behaviour policy is consistently applied across the school.

We are pleased to see that more of you are attending school regularly. Thank you again for your welcome and I wish you all the best during your time at Hetton. You can help the school to improve by continuing to come to school regularly and making sure all students understand and take account of the school's behaviour policy.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Farrow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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