

Hewens College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137078
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	397453
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	Allan Torr 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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	489
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss B Amos
Headteacher	Mr I O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	N/A
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Age group	11–18
Inspection date(s)	26–27 June 2012
Inspection number	397453



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Introduction

Inspection team

Allan Torr

Her Majesty's Inspector

Desmond Dunne

Additional Inspector

Julia Leewood

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 29 teachers in 33 lessons in a range of subjects. They made visits to form periods and an inspector visited the other college in the federation to observe Hewens students in their options subjects. Inspectors held meetings with five groups of students, with representatives from the governing body and with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including the school improvement plan, risk assessments and documents relating to the safeguarding of students. They also analysed in detail the school's data about absence and attendance and students' attainment and progress. Inspectors took account of the 28 questionnaires completed by staff, 104 completed by students and 27 returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Hewens is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school and the number on roll has almost halved since 2010. Hewens converted to an academy in 2011 from its predecessor school, Mellow Lane, and forms part of the Rosedale Hewens Academy Trust. The governing body is shared with Rosedale College. A well-above-average proportion of students are known to be eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are also above average. Around half of students are White British and around a fifth are from Indian heritages. Other groups include students from an African heritage, other White backgrounds and other Asian heritages. The proportion of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs (supported at school action plus or having a statement) is well above the national average. Since the previous inspection the unit for autistic spectrum disorders has closed as has the unit for students with speech, language and communication difficulties.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Hewens College is a good, and rapidly improving, school. It is not outstanding because students' behaviour is satisfactory and the attendance of some groups of pupils, such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are White British, lags behind others.
- There has been a significant improvement in students' attainment in national examinations and in the progress that the students make. In Key Stages 3 and 4 their achievement is now good and differences between performance of different subjects and groups of students are closing.
- The sixth form is satisfactory. Students' attainment is rising particularly at AS level and in equivalent qualifications, but their attainment at A level lags behind. The teaching and leadership and management of the sixth form are now good.
- The quality of teaching is good and there are strengths in teachers' subject knowledge, high expectations and in making lessons interesting and fast paced. The use of form time is less strong; time is sometimes wasted. Although students are active in lessons they sometimes lack the opportunities to work independently.
- Students' behaviour in class as observed by inspectors was overwhelmingly good. Students were polite, friendly and responsive to adults. Students and parents and carers reported incidences of teasing, swearing, goading and insensitive use of language, and words such as 'gay', to signify something of poor quality.
- Leadership and management are good and some elements are outstanding. The impact on raising the quality of teaching, raising attendance and raising students' achievement is impressive. There are highly effective systems for monitoring and improving teaching and attainment. However, communication with parents and carers is not as strong; for example there is no website for them.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' behaviour and their attendance by:
 - raising the attendance and punctuality of students who are White British and those who are known to be eligible for a free school meal so that they are at least in line with the national average
 - eliminating low-level teasing and students' use of insensitive language such as homophobic words.
- By January 2013, establish an effective website to increase the range and improve the quality of communication with parents and carers so that they know how to help their child with their learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making better use of form time
 - enabling students to be more independent in lessons and more responsible for their own learning
 - maximising opportunities to extend students' understanding and their knowledge.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The large majority of students said that they were happy to come to school, they learn a lot, staff help them to do as well as they can and that they know how well they are doing. This was confirmed by most parents and carers who returned a questionnaire, who said their child is making good progress. From their well-below-average starting points, students' achievement is good. Attainment by the end of Year 11 is average. This has not always been the case. In the past students' progress, particularly in mathematics and history, has been inadequate and far fewer students made the expected three levels of progress in 2010 and 2011. During the inspection, however, it was clear that expectations are high and students have challenging targets. It was common for teachers to discuss with students the level at which they were working and what they needed to aim for next. There was a relentless focus in lessons on achievement and ensuring students accelerate their progress.

In lessons, students acquire new skills and knowledge and consolidate previous learning well. This is particularly the case in humanities and languages where pupils' understanding of grammar and their development of speaking and communication skills are accelerated. Across all subjects teachers developed students' reading and literacy skills. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress partly due to close supervision and high expectations and partly because of effective teaching in lessons and in targeted intervention lessons. These groups of students are expected to attain grade C at GCSE as a minimum, regardless of their needs. In the past, students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, boys and those who are White British made inadequate progress and attained

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levels that are well below average and well below their peers from other groups. They now make good progress and attain higher because the curriculum has changed to meet their needs, they are challenged and have interventions and targeted teaching to push them onto the next level. There is still some way to go to increase this group's attainment, but their achievement is now good.

Students' attainment in the sixth form at A level has been low, but at AS it has been around average. Through better teaching students are now developing greater depth of understanding of their subjects. In one A-level chemistry lesson, for example, students made good progress because the teacher had good subject knowledge and challenged and supported them throughout. Students were comfortable to discuss areas of difficulty and responded confidently. In a government and politics session students made sustained and rapid progress because of the teacher's very high expectations. Students discussed at a sophisticated level the concept of power and how it was exerted on the world stage. The excellent balance between the teacher's input and students' reflection and collaborative learning deepened their understanding. Although improvements to teaching are secure, they have yet to have a full impact on achievement in the sixth form; so, as yet, the sixth form is judged satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers who completed a questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well, have their needs met and develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. A similar proportion of students agreed that teaching is good, adults explain how to improve their work and they know how well they are doing. In lessons across all subjects and key stages, teachers ensure there is a fast pace and they use their good subject knowledge to explain concepts to students so that they are able to make good progress in acquiring new knowledge as well as consolidating and building on prior learning. In one language lesson, for example, the teacher used resources very well and short interesting games and activities to consolidate the students' knowledge of French grammar and extend their understanding by applying it to new nouns and verbs. In a humanities lesson a teacher skilfully consolidated students' knowledge, cultural understanding and perceptions of native American Indians before moving on to new learning.

A strength across lessons was the good rapport with students. Where teaching was good, the students' responses to open-ended questions were used by the teacher to extend their thinking. Where teaching was less strong the teachers moved learning on too quickly before checking the full understanding of students and only a few students answered the questions. Not all students were involved in a few lessons and the teacher missed opportunities to extend students' knowledge and understanding. All teachers monitored the teaching group well, but some were better than others in developing students' independence and their responsibility for their own learning. Some teachers, for example, made students evaluate their own progress; in a sports education lesson the teacher asked students throughout the session to evaluate their tactics and their performance, with a view to improving it themselves. Lessons such

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as this are also effective in developing students' social skills and appreciation of each other.

Form time was not used as well as it could be to teach students and extend their thinking. In one session the activity was low level and so their achievement was minimal, and in another there was a lack of focus and time was used ineffectively. The management decision to ensure two adults are present in each Key Stage 3 class is highly effective. It enables teaching assistants to spend targeted time guiding and supporting pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. Their open-ended questioning, very high expectations and good instruction are effective.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students' attendance has risen significantly this year and is now slightly above average. In the previous three years there had been an annual rise in the level of persistent absenteeism. This meant that a large proportion of students were missing over a day a week in their education. In 2012 this changed so that only 3% of students missed the equivalent to a day a week. However, the students who are White British and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals attend less than other groups and are more likely to be persistent absentees or be late.

Over half of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire disagreed that behaviour was good and a significant proportion felt lessons were disrupted and the school did not deal well with bullying. They felt, however, that their children were safe in school. Most staff felt that behaviour is good, well managed and that bullying is dealt with well. Around one in three students disagreed that behaviour was good in school and in lessons; a similar proportion disagreed that bullying was dealt with well. In discussions, students said that most behaviour issues were teasing, name calling and goading which then led to more serious incidents. They also confirmed that, although racist incidents were rare, it was common to hear 'gay' used as a pejorative term. For example, in one interview with an inspector this term was used over five times in a few minutes. These incidents are not currently recorded as incidents of homophobia by the school. The school has taken action to prevent cyber bullying and students confirm that this form of bullying has reduced.

Changes to the timetable have reduced friction times within school, such as in corridors and playgrounds. Students told inspectors they felt safe and this was confirmed by those completing a questionnaire. In lessons during the inspection students' behaviour was good and on occasions outstanding. Teachers had to do little to manage or challenge behaviour because the lessons were lively, interesting and active and students were attentive, polite, positive and responsive. In the better lessons students contributed articulately, were considerate of each other and of staff, including teaching assistants and trainee teachers. In form time when students are less involved and less directed their behaviour is only satisfactory.

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Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good, although some aspects are outstanding. Senior leaders have managed the transition to an academy, falling numbers of students, reduced numbers of staff and curriculum changes whilst maintaining high staff morale. All staff in the questionnaire agreed they were proud to be a member of staff and they knew what the school was trying to achieve. The large majority also agreed leaders do all they can to improve teaching, the school makes provision for their professional development, staff consistently apply policies and the school is well led and managed. Parents and carers were less positive. A significant proportion disagreed that the school helps them to support their child's learning, responds well to their concerns and keeps them well informed. In their comments a few identified areas for improvement were the lack of a school website and the lack of communication. The school has introduced frequent newsletters, but a lack of a website hinders the ability for staff to extend communication and provide advice through new technology about how parents and carers can help their children to improve.

There have been significant improvements in attendance, students' achievement and in teaching. One of the reasons for this is the excellent academic leadership of senior and middle leaders and of staff throughout the school. The frequent, thorough and highly accurate monitoring of teaching enables each teacher to get updates as to the quality of their practice and how it impact on students' learning. The monitoring is then used effectively to improve teaching through training, staff meetings and through mentoring with experienced and able staff. Senior leaders' teaching is also monitored to ensure equality. Differences between subjects have closed and this in part is due to the monitoring taking place across subjects, so that for example a mathematics teacher could be monitored by a mathematician as well as someone from the humanities or languages departments. There is still some way to go to improve the attendance, attainment and punctuality of some groups of students and there is still some way to go to improve the students' behaviour. Although there is a little way to go, gaps between groups of students' attendance and achievement are closing quickly and discrimination is being tackled effectively.

The governing body has a good overview of the school, students' achievement and the quality of teaching. It ensures requirements for safeguarding students are fully met. It has shown itself capable of taking difficult decisions and in challenging positively and debating with school leaders. The quality of the curriculum is good and has improved with a greater focus on the needs of students and with links with the federated college. 'Success through collaboration' is justifiably written on the side of a minibus which runs students to their different courses held at the other school. The partnership with an outstanding college has brought benefits to students at Hewens even though a small number of parents disagree with this. The curriculum supports students' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Students felt they had a good understanding of different faiths, cultures, countries and of people from different backgrounds and characteristics. Trips and visits extend the curriculum and enable students to broaden their experience. A trip to Brighton, for example, was

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used to help students develop their drawing skills of landscapes; a trip to the courts of justice helped law students to deepen their understanding of the judicial process; and, a trip to South Africa for sixth formers helped to deepen students' appreciation of poverty and charity and of habitats.

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.

28 June 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Hewens College, Hayes UB4 8JP

You may remember I came recently with two colleagues to inspect Hewens College. Firstly, I would like to thank you for contributing to the inspection by giving your views to inspectors individually and in groups or by completing a questionnaire. Secondly, I would like to thank you for letting inspectors look at your work and for your cooperation in lessons, discussions and around the school.

The college has improved significantly in the last few years and it is now good. One reason for this is because of the excellent work by your senior leaders in raising expectations for teaching, raising your aspirations and raising the level of your achievement. A larger proportion of you attain more GCSEs and at a higher level. There is still some work to go to raise your attainment at A level and in the sixth form. Inspectors judged that you make good progress because your attendance has risen significantly, the majority of your lessons are good or better, and because you have challenging targets to reach and are shown how to attain them. To improve your lessons further I have asked the school to improve form time so that it is more productive and contributes better to your learning and progress. Perhaps you could make some suggestions to senior leaders about how the sessions could be improved. I have also asked the staff to devise ways for you to take more responsibility for your own progress in lessons to become more independent learners. Through the questionnaire and discussions you told us that you learn a lot, you develop communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills. The large majority of you like coming to school, feel safe and said that staff help you to do as well as you can and that teaching is good. A few students felt an area for improvement should be the GCSE options.

The students and parents and carers who returned a questionnaire and the students we spoke to felt that behaviour needed to be improved. We agreed with you. There is low level teasing and name calling and inappropriate use of language which can sometimes escalate quickly into more serious incidents. This is one of the reasons why inspectors judged your behaviour as satisfactory rather than good. Although your attendance has improved, some groups of students have lower than average attendance and are late for lessons. Attendance is crucial when looking for, and staying in, work. Inspectors felt this needed to be improved even further and I would urge all of you to make the most of your opportunities and attend school frequently and to be on time.

You and your parents and carers told us that there is no website and communication with the school could be improved. In addition, your parents and carers would like to know how to help you with your learning. I have asked the school to establish a website which will increase the range of communication, but could also be used to show your parents and carers how they can help in improving your achievement.

I wish you success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector

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