

The Hurst Community College

Brimpton Road, Baughurst, Tadley, RG26 5NL

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While the number of students achieving GCSE A* to C grades in mathematics is average, students' progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 has been below average.
- The progress made by some very small groups of students, particularly those eligible for the pupil premium and those supported at school action, is slower than that of other students in the school.
- Some teachers do not use available assessment information to plan lessons and set appropriate homework that meet the needs of all students. As a result, sometimes progress in lessons and during independent study at home is slower than it should be.
- Some teachers do not mark the students' work as regularly or as thoroughly as they should. Consequently, students do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. The school's marking policy is not always consistently used across all departments.
- The headteacher and other leaders have not checked regularly enough that initiatives to improve teaching are being carried out and are having a direct impact on the learning and progress of different groups of students.

The school has the following strengths

- The behaviour of the students in lessons and around the school is good. The school is welcoming and there is an atmosphere of respect and courtesy between staff and students.
- Attainment at GCSE grades A* to C in the majority of subject areas is just above average and progress in some key areas such as English and science is good.
- The school offers a broad curriculum and many opportunities for students to participate in trips and extra-curricular activities.
- Pastoral care is good. The vertical tutoring system within a House structure enables students to mix across year groups and as a result, students feel well cared for and safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 44 lessons, including 10 lessons which were jointly observed by inspectors and senior leaders.
- Inspectors took account of 95 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires from 57 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, safeguarding and students' assessment information, as well as examples of students' work.
- They held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, staff and groups of students.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stuart Sherman	Additional Inspector
Ann Short	Additional Inspector
George Raynor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hurst Community College is of average size for a secondary school and is a specialist science college.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent or carer in the armed services) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- The school provides a wide range of pre-school and adult services managed by the governing body. This includes Miss Polly's Kindergarten, which is registered to provide day care for children from birth to age five. This provision was inspected separately and the inspection report is available on Ofsted's website.
- A very small number of students attend work-related courses at Basingstoke College of Technology on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good and raise achievement, especially in mathematics between Key Stages 2 and 4, by making sure that all teachers:
 - use assessment information when planning their lessons so that activities meet the needs of each student and are appropriately challenging
 - regularly and thoroughly mark students' day-to-day work, giving clear guidance on what students need to do to improve it
 - give students clear guidance on work to be undertaken at home and how it will be assessed.
- Improve the rates of students' progress, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those supported at school action, by:
 - carefully checking the impact of specific initiatives designed to help these groups make accelerated progress so that they achieve as well as other students in the school.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of school leaders by:
 - regularly monitoring the impact of whole-school initiatives on students' learning and progress and make changes as necessary to accelerate students' progress
 - making sure that whole-school policies, particularly relating to teaching and learning, are consistently applied by all teachers.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' attainment when they join the school is just above average. By the time they leave school, at the end of Year 11, the proportion achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is also just above average. The school therefore does not overall add enough value to students' learning.
- In 2012, attainment at GCSE grades A* to C was just above average in English and average in mathematics. The proportion of students making expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English has been broadly average. In mathematics it has been below average. This is because the work has not always been challenging enough and marking does not always explain what students have to do to improve.
- Early entry in GCSE of some more-able students for statistics allows them to study further mathematics in Year 11.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action has been below average in both English and mathematics. Support does not always target precisely their needs and its impact is not measured sufficiently carefully to see what difference it is making.
- Leaders are using the pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium to provide a range of initiatives. However, the targeting of specific students and the monitoring of the impact of these initiatives on students' progress require improvement as in some cases progress is too slow or eligible students have not received appropriate support.
- Of the small group of students eligible for the pupil premium, progress in English is above average and just below their peers at the school. In mathematics, however, progress is below their peers nationally. Current assessment data indicate that this gap will narrow significantly in 2013, bringing the progress of this group in mathematics in line with their peers. However, there is still almost a GCSE grade's difference between the attainment of eligible pupils and that of other students in English and mathematics.
- Work-related studies at Basingstoke College of Technology effectively meet the needs of a very small group of students.
- In 2012, students did particularly well in literature, communication studies, core science and other sciences and work-related studies.
- The progress of the very small number of students who have a statement of special educational needs is better than their peers nationally in both English and mathematics.
- The literacy coordinator and the literacy action group have carried out a number of initiatives across the school, including clear guidance on how to mark students' written work effectively. However, this is inconsistently applied throughout the school.
- The library is well used, particularly by Key Stage 3 students and students have timetabled, focused library lessons to develop their literacy skills.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Initiatives to improve teaching and learning are not consistently applied and consequently, in some lessons, students' progress is slow. In these lessons, planning is often poor, with little consideration of the pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Teachers tend to talk for extended periods limiting opportunities for independent learning. The work set is often not challenging enough, with students completing the same task at the same speed.
- In some lessons, day-to-day work is not regularly or thoroughly marked and as a result, students are not sure what they need to do to improve it. Equally, some teachers do not give students opportunities to respond to their comments.
- In some lessons, students are encouraged to assess how well they have done and at times this is a valuable exercise. However, when it is simply ticking correct answers students benefit little

from the procedure.

- The setting of work to be undertaken at home is inconsistent both across the school and in some departments. Students are sometimes unclear as to what they were expected to complete at home and how it would be assessed.
- In the best teaching, students are actively engaged in their learning, working collaboratively and using a range of high-quality resources. Teachers plan carefully, showing good levels of subject expertise and teaching assistants play an active part in the lesson. Consequently, progress in these lessons is good.
- For instance, in a physics lesson, while revising the Doppler Effect, students were given clear literacy steps to success in order to produce an effective response to an examination question. They worked collaboratively, with many progressing on to the extension task with enthusiasm.
- In an English lesson, students were working on their speaking and listening skills, wearing coloured 'thinking caps'. The teacher and teaching assistant knew the capability of individuals within the group and the group discussions were arranged to match students' abilities. Levels of engagement were very high and, as a result, students were disappointed that the lesson had to end.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students say they have a positive experience of school and enjoy good relationships with their teachers and value how they support them in their learning.
- Students enjoy practical activities and understand how to work collaboratively together to support one another's learning.
- Vertical tutoring, the prefect system and peer-mentoring provide students with a range of opportunities to receive appropriate support and students mix well with each other. As a consequence, students feel safe and commented that any incidences of bullying are dealt with quickly and very effectively. The school has introduced a programme to develop e-safety training.
- Responses from Parent View indicate that the vast majority of parents feel their children are safe, happy and that behaviour is good.
- The school operates an effective area for those students needing some time-out from lessons, and as a result, the number of exclusions has dropped significantly.
- Planned, themed curriculum days called 'airbrick days' give students opportunities to explore issues in depth. For instance, a 'Holocaust Day', a 'Cultural Diversity Day' and a 'Financial Literacy Day' showed the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities.
- Attendance has been below average. However, senior leaders have taken decisive steps to tackle poor performance and, as a result, current attendance data indicate that it is now in line with the national average.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Progress towards improving some of the key action points raised during the previous Ofsted inspection has been too slow. In particular, teachers are not consistently planning to meet the needs of individual students, strategies are not effective enough to assess the progress of different groups of learners and achievement is not good in all subjects.
- School leaders have carried out whole-school initiatives to make teaching more consistent. However, they are not monitoring the impact of these initiatives on students' learning rigorously enough, particularly for specific groups of students.
- The headteacher and other leaders have a detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and these are set out in the school's development plan. They have begun to tackle areas of weaker performance, for instance progress in mathematics. As a result of a wide range of initiatives, progress this year is set to rise significantly.

- The pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up premium are being used to fund a range of strategies. However, not enough has been done to check on the impact of these strategies on targeted students to make sure that they make accelerated progress so that their attainment comes at least into line with their peer group.
- The headteacher is well supported by effective senior leaders who are carrying out a range of well-considered initiatives to support and challenge staff.
- The headteacher and other leaders in the school have worked hard to build positive relationships with parents and carers and other local schools. This is reflected in the findings of the very positive staff questionnaires and responses on Parent View.
- The headteacher effectively manages teachers' performance. A more rigorous system of target setting linked to students' progress has been introduced. There are opportunities for teachers to develop their own professional skills through the school's training programme.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of courses including BTEC qualifications and GCSEs and is regularly reviewed.
- A careers specialist offers good advice to students, particularly at the end of Year 11 as they transfer to post-16 employment and training so that the number of school leavers not going on to employment or further training has dropped considerably over time.
- Previous funding for the science specialism has been used to improve provision and this has had a positive impact on both the popularity of science as a Key Stage 4 option choice and on students' attainment and progress.
- A member of staff, overseen by a senior leader, monitors the induction of the very small number of students attending Basingstoke College of Technology on a part-time basis and monitors day-to-day attendance and progress. This has ensured good progress for these students.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well through planned assemblies, lessons, the school environment and a wide range of enrichment opportunities.
- The local authority has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and offers a medium level of support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and its areas for development and regularly receives updates on new initiatives.
 - The governing body understands its role in monitoring the achievement of all students and in particular, the performance of certain groups such as those eligible for pupil-premium funding. It is currently restructuring its roles and responsibilities to make sure that there is an appropriate link governor who keeps an overview of such groups. Link governors regularly work with departments and have a good understanding of students' progress.
 - The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, safeguarding requirements are met and the school is financially stable.
 - The governing body has worked effectively with the headteacher to see that teachers' performance is managed robustly and where there is underperformance appropriate action is taken swiftly to tackle it. The governing body knows what the school is doing to reward good teaching.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	116422
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	412832

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	970
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Godfrey
Headteacher	Malcolm Christian
Date of previous school inspection	16 – 17 June 2010
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