



Holly Hall Maths and Computing College

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 103875
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 277019
Inspection dates 29 September 2005 to 30 September 2005
Reporting inspector Marion Thompson RISP

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Scotts Green Close
School category	Foundation		Russells Hall Estate
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Dudley, West Midlands DY1 2DU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 253722
Number on roll	658	Fax number	01384 456705
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs S Sharp
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Graham Lloyd

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 29 September 2005 - 30 September 2005	Inspection number 277019
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Holly Hall School Mathematics and Computing College is a small, mixed, comprehensive school, situated in a suburb of Dudley. Above average numbers of pupils are eligible for free school meals and there are substantial levels of deprivation in parts of the community the school serves. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 had levels below those expected on entry to the school, but they are average in Years 7 to 9. Around a third of pupils on roll are from minority ethnic groups. These pupils are mainly of Pakistani or Indian heritage and there is a significant group with a Caribbean background. A range of other ethnicities is also represented. Around 15% of pupils speak languages other than English, although only six pupils are at the early stages of learning English. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than might be expected in a school of this size. Nearly all of the pupils spend the whole of their secondary education at the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Holly Hall offers a satisfactory education for its pupils and provides satisfactory value for money. Many aspects of provision, such as personal development, the curriculum, support, care and guidance, are good; these have made a major contribution to the improvement in pupils' achievement. The school has the confidence of parents, who feel that it is much improved. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9, and reach average standards, achieving particularly well in mathematics. In Years 10 and 11, standards achieved are improving. The GCSE results were still not high enough in 2005, particularly for a number of White, Afro-Caribbean and mixed-race pupils, some of whom had poor attendance. Pupils currently in Year 11 reach standards that represent satisfactory achievement from their starting points on entry to the school. In securing this the school has overcome serious staffing and management problems, which had previously hindered progress. Guidance and improvement systems are now having an impact on older pupils, as well as on younger ones. However, a small minority of disaffected pupils in Year 11 make inadequate progress and do not attend regularly despite the school's best efforts. Teaching is satisfactory but often lacks pace and does not provide sufficient opportunities for independent learning. Monitoring of teaching does not consistently provide specific advice on how to improve. The headteacher provides good leadership for the school. The school's managers judge school effectiveness to be good, because their assessment of teaching and management is too high. In other respects, their judgments are similar to those of the inspection team. Improvement since the previous inspection has been slow, because of staffing difficulties, but it is now satisfactory. The school has the capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should:
- improve the achievement and attendance of the small minority of disaffected learners in Year 11
- increase the pace of lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to learn independently
- ensure the monitoring process consistently provides teachers with specific advice on how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although there is still some way to go, standards across the school are rising and pupils are making better progress. In the 2004 national tests at age 14, results well below average but represented good achievement. In 2005, pupils' test results were higher than the previous year in all three subjects. Pupils reached expected levels and exceeded challenging targets. This represented good progress. In English, pupils made better progress in writing than in reading, but this did not noticeably affect standards in

other subjects. Results in mathematics were especially high because the highest attaining pupils made particularly good progress.

Improvement is also evident in Years 10 and 11, although more needs to be done. The education of pupils in Year 11 was affected by the school's previous difficulties. Results in GCSE examinations in 2004 were significantly below average and represented inadequate progress, particularly for boys. They improved in 2005 overall, especially for boys, and more pupils reached the highest grades. Pupils of Indian heritage achieved well in both years. There was a significant rise in higher grades in double science, information and communication technology (ICT) GNVQ and English literature, all areas targeted for improvement. Pupils following an alternative vocational curriculum achieved well. However, results fell considerably short of the school's targets and showed some deterioration in the performance of girls. A significant number of who had poor attendance, made inadequate progress. A further group of nine pupils did not take examinations for non-education related reasons. In the current Year 10, standards are higher and progress is good. In Year 11, achievement is satisfactory overall. This is confirmed by the school's robust monitoring process, results in early-entry GCSE and first-hand evidence. However, a small group of pupils with poor attendance is still making inadequate progress. Pupils with additional educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. They get on well with each other, their teachers and other adults in school, and they value the help they receive. As a result, they develop a positive attitude to learning and this contributes to their improving achievement and the positive school ethos. Behaviour both in the classrooms and around the school is good, and pupils are generally attentive and responsive. They pay due attention to safety issues and demonstrate a good awareness of how to live a healthy life. The school needs to further develop pupils' skills in working independently and in groups to enable them to think things through for themselves.

The pupils value the school's systems of rewards and sanctions and the students council, which involves pupils of all ages. They feel the school listens to what they have to say in further improving school life. For example, they were successful in having water fountains in the school, which supports the whole school healthy lifestyle initiative. Pupils feel they are given a genuine voice in decision making. They play a valuable role in staff interviews and attending governors' meetings.

Attendance is satisfactory overall, but is lower in Year 11, particularly for a group of pupils identified by the school. Punctuality is generally good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils who are vulnerable derive considerable benefit from working with teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution through individual support, both personal and academic. The good attention paid to developing pupils' basic and social skills and emotional development prepares pupils well for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Over the past few years the quality of teaching and learning has been adversely affected by serious staffing difficulties, especially in science, ICT and English. Currently, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good in mathematics. It is, however, inadequate in a few classes, where teaching and learning lack pace and challenge.

Most lessons have clear purposes and the quality of exposition is good, ensuring that pupils understand their work and make adequate progress. Sufficient attention is paid to the development of pupils' literacy skills and this is particularly good in Spanish. The consistent implementation of the behaviour policy results in an ethos conducive to learning. At its very best, teaching is characterised by good relationships, knowledge, enthusiasm and extremely high expectations. Overall, lessons lack sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills and are rarely dynamic or highly challenging.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to ensure it is flexible enough to respond to individual needs. Some pupils with learning difficulties in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a wide range of college courses, which include the Wheels Project, where pupils learn car maintenance and formal vocational courses including hairdressing and beauty. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 enter for some GCSE examinations early and have considerable success. The recently introduced work related programme for student apprenticeship provides a successful pathway for disaffected pupils. Pupils with behavioural difficulties receive personal learning programmes through these innovative projects to ensure their emotional learning needs are met. The mother of a pupil who had literacy and behavioural difficulties felt that the provision the school made to improve his reading, help him manage his frustration and find a college course he enjoyed, had improved his confidence, self-esteem and prepared him well for adult life.

Six 'enrichment days' per year have been introduced where pupils enjoy cultural trips linked to the curriculum. For instance, the English department takes pupils to Stratford. There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities, including netball, football and cricket, but parents feel there could be more activities in the arts, for example school productions. Pupils' opinions about the curriculum are valued and the school has altered the programme in modern foreign languages to enable pupils to learn the languages they prefer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. Careful tracking of pupils' progress and the involvement of pupils and parents in target setting are now having a positive impact on the learning and achievement of older pupils as well as younger ones. For example, a Year 10 pupil acknowledged that without this process he would not have achieved a high level in his mathematics tests in Year 9. The tutorial programme, which was introduced in 2004, integrates citizenship and personal, social and health education (PSHE) effectively and ensures all pupils participate in collective worship and form tutorials. The programme contributes well to pupils' adoption of healthy, safe lifestyles and raises pupils' awareness of the effects of drug misuse. The school has good systems for ensuring pupils' safety. These are regularly reviewed. Risk assessment is in place for all curriculum areas. Child protection policy and procedures are good. The support provided by the teaching assistants and learning mentors and the well organised special education provision are strengths of the care pupils receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported by a newly restructured management team, is providing good determined leadership. He has won the confidence of parents and the school community. For example, behaviour is now good and many staff and a large number of parents comment on the improvement. He has a clear vision for improving standards more quickly. The curriculum has been developed to match pupils' interests and aspirations. Serious deficiencies in leadership and management at senior level and in English, ICT, design and technology and science have been successfully tackled. The quality of middle management is now satisfactory, but varied, and there is a need for ongoing support in some areas. The headteacher has worked hard to overcome extended staffing shortages and unsatisfactory teaching; the school now has the capacity to move forward.

The supportive and hardworking governors bring a wealth of experience to their work. They know and understand the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. They are diligent about pupils' health and safety. The school's evaluation is honest and correctly identifies actions likely to bring about improvement. It is over generous in the evaluation of teaching, management and therefore overall effectiveness. Monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and supportive but does not consistently provide advice which is specific enough to help teachers to improve. Parents are regularly asked to contribute their views and are extremely supportive of the school and the management. The school listens and takes actions.

The school's finances are tightly controlled and audit reports confirm that they are well managed. Best value for purchases is tightly controlled. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory overall but has been slowed by the challenging staffing situation. The quality of the leadership and management is ensuring that the school now has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We very much enjoyed our time at your school and would like to thank you for making us so welcome, particularly those of you who gave up your time to speak to us at length.

What we liked most about your school:

you work hard and make satisfactory progress

your behaviour towards others and attitudes to your learning are good; you enjoy school

your teachers are doing a satisfactory job; you make particularly good progress in mathematics

the programme of learning reflects your interests and hopes

the care, support and guidance provided by staff in the school are good

the school is run well by the senior staff.

What we have asked the school to do now:

work with those pupils and their families, especially in Year 11, whose attendance is poor and who do not achieve enough, so that they achieve as well as they can

continue to help pupils develop their literacy skills, particularly in reading

make sure all teaching is as good as the best and provide good advice to teachers on what they need to do to improve

improve the management of some areas of school, so that it is uniformly good.