



Houghton Kepier Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108868
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278067
Inspection dates 6 April 2006 to 6 April 2006
Reporting inspector Brian Blake HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Dairy Lane
School category	Foundation		Houghton le Spring
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Tyne and Wear, DH4 5BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536528
Number on roll	1397	Fax number	0191 5536533
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Peter Collins
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Susan Hyland

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	6 April 2006 - 6 April 2006	278067

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors. During the course of this one day visit, inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior staff, some heads of departments, a representative group of pupils from across the year groups, and the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also observed eight half lessons, some of which were carried out in partnership with the headteacher and one of the deputy headteachers. The school's very helpful self-evaluation of its strengths and areas for development, together with recent pupil performance data, provided the inspection team with a valuable insight into the successes of the school since its previous inspection in 2001.

Description of the school

Houghton Kepier, which is larger than the average sized secondary school, has specialist college status for sport. Almost one-third of pupils come from areas with high levels of deprivation. The school population is very stable. There are marginally more girls than boys on roll, with a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. The school has a very small proportion of minority ethnic pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Houghton Kepier School provides a good quality of education for its pupils, and is continuing to improve at an impressive rate. Outstanding leadership from the headteacher gives a clear drive and direction to the work of the school, and underpins the significant progress currently being made. The senior management team know the school's strengths and areas for development very well. Consultation and collaboration are used to great effect to ensure that all staff, pupils, parents and governors share a common sense of purpose and direction. As a result, all those who met with inspectors spoke eloquently about their ambitions for the future development of the school.

Pupils start at the school with below average standards, but they make good overall progress and leave in Year 11 with standards for five or more good GCSEs that are just above the national average. Girls generally do better than boys. This overall progress is due to the significant improvements at Key Stage 4, although there are still some subjects, including English and mathematics, where achievement is below the national average at the higher grades, and some underachievement at Key Stage 3. Although the school is beginning to address this underperformance successfully, these actions will need to be consolidated to drive up standards in the future.

The quality of teaching seen is at least satisfactory, more often good, and occasionally outstanding. Teachers care passionately about the pupils, and this is evident in lessons. Relationships are excellent, and teachers want the pupils to succeed and do the best of which they are capable. Lessons are planned thoroughly, and all pupils know clearly what teachers expect them to achieve. Pupils, for their part, respond positively to good quality teaching. They appreciate fully that teachers make enormous efforts to help them and, as one pupil said: 'Teachers are very helpful - you can talk to them at any time and they listen to you. They value what we say, and they want us to do well'.

Pupils are very proud of the school, and rightly so. Pupils feel safe, and their general well-being is a high priority for all adults in the school. Success and personal endeavour are encouraged, and readily recognised and rewarded. The ethos of wanting to do well and celebrating when it is achieved underpins all that the school does. Pupils enjoy attending school, although overall attendance is just below the national average due to a high proportion of pupils taking term-time holidays. The school links very well with a number of external groups, local businesses, universities and other schools. This culture of extending opportunities is helping to raise pupils' expectations of what they can achieve. Parents are very positive about the school and feel well informed. One parent, in responding on the inspection questionnaire commented: 'I feel the school offers lots of extra activities in a wide variety, giving the children many opportunities they may not have otherwise had. The staff I have had contact with have all been approachable, and issues are always dealt with. I think the reward system is good.'

The curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet the varied needs of pupils, and recent developments at Key Stage 4 are providing more vocational opportunities for pupils. This has been a key element in helping the school to motivate the pupils to want to succeed.

Overall care, guidance and support are good. All requirements to ensure that pupils are safe from harm are applied rigorously, and robust health and safety procedures are used to protect the pupils fully when they are involved in school activities. This approach gives pupils a great confidence in the school, and in the teachers, to safeguard them fully from unnecessary risks.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, but the school is improving at an impressive rate. Although pupils start at the school with below average standards, they make good overall progress. In 2005, standards at the end of Key Stage 4 exceeded the national average for the percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* - C grades. This rate of progress places the school in the top 10% of schools nationally. However, too few pupils achieve as well as they should in English and mathematics at both key stages, and science at Key Stage 3, although the school is making good progress in addressing this shortfall. At Key Stage 4, art & design, design & technology, English language, English literature, geography, mathematics and physical education are below the national averages for grades A* - C; French, by contrast, achieves significantly above for the same higher grades. The school is actively tackling this variation in performance, and improvements are now seen across all these subjects. Targeted support for boys is helping to raise their overall standards. In 2005, all Key Stage 4 targets were met or exceeded, with only English achieving its Key Stage 3 target. However, recent improvements indicate that the school is on course to meet its 2006 targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are safeguarded well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and is exemplified in the way all adults in the school work with the pupils. Pupils enjoy attending school, and although overall attendance is just below the national average, the school is continuing to tackle the high number of parents who take term-time holidays. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to develop their appreciation of life and different cultures outside of school. Pupils feel that their opinions are valued, and that teachers are keen to hear how life at Houghton Kepier School can be improved. As one pupil said: 'It's a good school; a pleasure to be at. Everyone is accepting - both teachers and pupils. It's really rewarding'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. In all lessons seen, teaching is at least satisfactory, more often good, and occasionally outstanding. There is a real sense of passion about the way teachers work with the pupils. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly; they make clear what they want pupils to learn, and use questions effectively to help consolidate what pupils know, understand and can do. Pupils respond very well to good quality teaching. As one pupil commented: 'Teachers are very helpful - you can talk to them in lessons.' Pupils show interest in their work, and they enjoy achieving the highest standards of which they are capable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good, meeting well the needs of all pupils. The broadening of the Key Stage 4 curriculum, in particular, has been very successful, and is now providing more vocational and work-related courses that take account of the needs of the pupils, local community and employers. As a result of this extension to the curriculum, pupils' attitudes to their learning are very positive. The range of additional support to raise standards in literacy and numeracy is making a difference to pupils' achievements across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support for all its pupils. Clear and effective safeguarding procedures are in place, including risk assessments. The school has an innovative pastoral system, which is working very well; the guidance pupils receive is outstanding, and this makes them feel safe, secure and valued. All pupils benefit from regular interviews with year leaders, who discuss pupils' personal targets and help them make informed choices. Parents are well informed, as indicated by one parent who commented: 'I am delighted at the successful transition from primary to secondary, together with the regular letters of praise for consistent good work and attendance. I find this very rewarding as a parent that my child's positive approach to her education is acknowledged and rewarded'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall, and that of the headteacher outstanding. Her clear vision for the school is shared by management at all levels, which gives a clear direction for future school improvement. As a result of rigorous self-evaluation, senior leaders have an excellent knowledge of the school. The views of pupils, staff,

parents and governors are effectively taken into account at every stage of the school's planning. Governance is good, and provides challenge and support for senior managers. The school achieves good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	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	2	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	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Mrs Susan Hyland

Houghton Kepier Sports College

Dairy Lane

Houghton le Spring

Tyne and Wear

DH4 5BH

6 Apr 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for the welcome that you gave to me and my colleague when we recently visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our day visit to meet with your teachers, watch some lessons, and talk with some of you about life at Houghton Kepier. We noticed that you behaved very well in lessons and that you responded very positively to good teaching. You told us that you enjoy school and feel safe, and that your teachers work hard to help you do as well as you can.

We know that standards are improving, but we are asking the school to continue to work hard to help all of you achieve the best of which you are capable at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Your headteacher and other adults who work in the school are very clear about what they need to do to make the school better, and to help you all achieve the highest possible standards. All of you can help the school to improve, through hard work, good behaviour and good attendance.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Brian Blake HMI

Her Majesty's inspector