Healing School, A Specialist Science College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number	118095
LEA	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	280240
Inspection dates	29 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector	Ian Richardson 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**	Low Road
School category	Community		Healing
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Grimsby, DN41 7QD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	**Telephone number**	01472 502400
Number on roll	785	**Fax number**	01472 502401
Appropriate authority	The governing body	**Chair of governors**	Mr Anthony Beach
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	**Headteacher**	Mrs Ann Addison

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

During the inspection the inspector talked with two groups of students, individual members of staff (teaching and non-teaching), the special educational needs co-ordinator, four heads of department, the chair of governors, the headteacher and senior leadership team. Lessons observed included one that was seen by both the inspector and a member of the senior leadership team. The inspector had access to a range of documentation that provided evidence for the self evaluation carried out by the school. Standards were further investigated through scrutiny of students' work both in lessons and from a sample of students' work gathered for that purpose. The inspector had access to questionnaires completed by students and 370 questionnaires completed by parents.

Description of the school

Healing School is a community comprehensive school for boys and girls ages 11 to 16. The school serves an area of relative social and economic advantage. The school was awarded Specialist School status on 1 September 2004. It is smaller than the national average and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. It has a very small proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language. The proportion of students with special educational needs, including statements, is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Healing is an effective school with outstanding leadership. The energy, skills and efforts of the staff are promoting the good achievements of students. Students show positive attitudes to learning, and they are playing their part well in contributing to the success of the school.

At the heart of the school is a clear priority to raise the attainment of students and to ensure they make good progress. There is an unwillingness to be satisfied with good standards but to strive to go beyond. The key target of the school expressed in the Development Plan for this academic year is to 'Raise attainment by improving the learning experience for all students'. Complacency is an adjective that could not be applied to this school, and the high standards worked for are not confined to the academic; as one parent wrote: 'The school has the highest academic standards combined with excellent pastoral care. Relationships between staff and students, and staff and parents have always been very good'.

Examination success at GCSE confirms that students make progress during their time at Healing that is significantly above that of similar schools and reach standards above the average. The senior leadership team, however, have identified differences in performance between subjects and between different groups of students. For example, data on outcomes at the end of Key Stage 3 show a differential performance of students between core subjects. The school leadership team, working with heads of department, has employed close analysis techniques to evaluate why these differences have occurred. They have already set in place planning and taken actions to reduce this differential. The school has recognised the need to ensure that teachers focus upon the effectiveness of children's learning.

The school provides a well ordered and positive atmosphere for learning. Students give a clear view of their enjoyment of their time in school and describe a range of factors that promote their enjoyment. These include: 'the good quality of teachers and how they do their best for you'; the range of extracurricular activities – 'lots of clubs and things to do at dinnertime or after school'; the approachability of staff – 'teachers will always see you when you need help'. Also during interviews all the students expressed the view that they were completely safe in the school. A very large proportion of parents share this view: 'I am very pleased with the high standards the school expects of all its students and I like the way the school won't tolerate bad behaviour'.

Students are learning how to stay safe and to adopt healthy life styles. They give clear evidence that they know what promotes and what damages health. They recognise the moves taken by the school towards healthier living, and their responsibilities in that change are acknowledged. No pupil expressed regret at the reduction in availability of chips. Clearly students feel that their views, as represented in the school council, have been effective in bringing about improvements, such as the increased provision of water fountains. The students show themselves to be mature and responsible. The very good behaviour they exhibit in class and around the school is evidence of their

good personal development. When the inspector talked with students as individuals or in groups they showed mature attitudes and a willingness to express their views although a minority do not contribute to lessons as well as they could and need more encouragement to join in learning activities. Students' maturity and positive attitudes are also evident in their willingness to take on responsibilities in the community, such as serving as prefects or supporting other students by taking on the role of peer listeners.

Teaching is good and this is clearly appreciated by the students, who spoke overwhelmingly positively of their teachers. Teaching is monitored effectively by the senior leadership team and heads of department. Good records are kept of the lesson observations and, along with dialogue with staff, these provide a good basis for identification of needs for professional development. Not only do teachers feel they receive good feedback from such observations, but they clearly describe that the feedback sessions are providing a good opportunity for them to express their views. The management and evaluation of the professional development is systematically carried out, and meets the needs of teachers. These prioritised professional development arrangements not only seek to support personal development of teachers, but also to promote the school's principal aims and objectives as expressed in the development plan. Staff have a positive view of these arrangements.

Assessment practice in most areas is good and well matched to purposes. A thorough approach to assessment is taken, with relevant testing and teachers' assessment of learning being used in combination. These assessments provide a good basis for evaluating the achievement of students, identifying learning needs, informing teachers' planning, and checking the effectiveness of teaching. Although there are some differences observed between subject areas, there is a clear drive to ensure that thorough analysis of assessment data is used to inform both teachers' planning and students' efforts to improve. The good practice seen in the senior leadership team and highest performing subjects provide good models for this development.

The curriculum offered in the school is appropriate to students' needs and meets statutory requirements. The staff are seeking to provide an even richer curriculum to ensure all needs are well met. There is an extensive extra-curricular programme of activities that is valued by students. They show their appreciation by the good levels of attendance. Students who do not participate are in a minority.

Students feel listened to, and they value the very good relationships with staff. They describe staff as 'always willing to help you at their own expense' and spoke about teachers' willingness to stay behind after school, or see students at lunchtime to give them extra support. The learning mentors have a key role in supporting students, but students clearly show that the mentors, while doing a good job, are not the only source of support.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The leadership given by the headteacher permeates the whole school and is universally thought to be of a high standard. Management arrangements are systematic and clearly based on monitoring activity, and rigorous and detailed analysis of performance data. The senior leadership team operates in a co-ordinated way, and all members understand and hold

fast to the priorities set for the school. Governors are well informed, but more importantly play an active and significant role in the promotion of high standards in the school. Governors understand and share the priorities of the senior leadership team. The effectiveness of the leadership and management is evidenced by the clarity of understanding of the staff at all levels. Students are well aware of the school's priorities and the part they can play in the success.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

A high proportion of parents believe that their children are making good progress as a consequence of good teaching. One quote from the many positive comments made by parents is: 'I am very pleased with the high standards the school expects of all its students. Well done to the headteacher and all her staff'. Standards are indeed high, with data showing progress made by students at GCSE to be significantly above those of similar schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students show high levels of enjoyment and involvement in the life of the school. In discussion, and in the way they behave, students show mature and responsible attitudes. They speak enthusiastically about the way their voices are heard in, for example, school council. They exhibit high levels of trust in staff and speak positively of the way teachers and other adults in the school demonstrate care for their well-being and success. All students interviewed thought that the level of care was outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and is effectively monitored through lesson observations and the thorough analysis of the outcomes of assessment. Assessment is carried out systematically, and students feel very well informed about their performance and what they can do to improve. The work teachers do in providing feedback is greatly appreciated by the students. There is a clear drive to make the quality of learning the key focus for teachers and to ensure they make the best use of assessment data.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum of the school fully meets legal requirements. Students think the curriculum offers a good range of courses suited to them. The good links with other organisations provide additional learning opportunities and the school is seeking to further diversify the curriculum by, for example, including more vocational learning

to meet the needs of different learners. The curriculum is enriched in a range of ways, and there is an impressive range of, and high participation rate in, extracurricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students rate the support they receive from staff very highly. They speak of how approachable staff are, and how freely they give of their time to support students. Students feel safe and give accounts of how rapidly and effectively problems they encounter are dealt with. This view is also strongly held by parents, with a very large proportion agreeing that their children are safe and well cared for. 'Any problems we have had have been quickly and professionally dealt with'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and senior leadership team know their school very well indeed. Their own monitoring of staff and pupil performance provide an excellent evidence base to be used for planning. The approach to management is rational, systematic and rigorous. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and valued by heads of department, teachers, non-teaching staff and, importantly, by students. Staff feel their views are listened to, and they show high levels of trust in the senior leadership team.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	**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	1	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?	2	NA
The standards[1] reached by learners	2	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	2	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

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To the students of:

Healing School, A Specialist Science College

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29 June 2006

Dear Students

I enjoyed my inspection visit to your school very much. From the moment I parked the car, and saw the orderly and sensible way you were arriving at school, I got the first impression that the students at this school show maturity and responsibility. This impression grew stronger as the day went on. I am grateful to those of you who spoke with me and let me know what you think of the school. You gave me a clear view that you liked the school, thought the teachers did a good job and that they were willing to help you at any time. You described what you like about the lessons, the good range of activities and the wide range of extra curricular activities. Many of you are making good use of the opportunities provided, and I encourage those of you who are not trying your best, or have not joined in so far, to have a go.

I agree with you and the senior leadership of the school that teachers are doing a good job. They are providing you with good opportunities to learn and using their good teaching skills to keep you engaged. You can help them to do their job by encouraging each other to take full part in lessons and to let teachers know when you do not understand something. I know that most of you think the teachers are very approachable and willing to help, and I agree with you. It is clear to me that what you say and think is important to the staff, so let them know.

The headteacher and her management team are doing an extremely good job. She wants the very best for you, and with the help of the staff she is providing a good place for you to learn, that is safe, and gives you the care and guidance needed for you to be successful. I wish you all the best for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Ian Richardson HMI