



Huntington School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121673
LEA York
Inspection number 281075
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Susan Bowles HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Huntington Road
School category	Community		Huntington
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		York YO32 9WT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01904 752100
Number on roll	1503	Fax number	01904 752101
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Leach
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr C Bridge

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 18 January 2006 - 19 January 2006	Inspection number 281075
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Huntington School in York, is a larger than average mixed comprehensive school with a sixth form. It is an established Technology College and a Leading Edge school. With 1,503 pupils on roll, it is bigger than most secondary schools. It serves an economically diverse community, with few pupils from ethnic minorities, and draws pupils from the north-eastern suburbs of York as well as from a more rural area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below the national average. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is a little above the average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors judge that Huntington School provides a good education for its pupils, and has significant outstanding features. Leadership and management of the school are outstanding, and have been very effective in raising achievement and standards since the last inspection. Achievement is consistently high and improving, and parents are rightly pleased with the excellent progress which the school helps their children to make. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, aspire to reach good grades and develop good learning skills, as a result of the excellent care, guidance and support and good teaching. Partnership with external support services makes sure young people get help when needed. These features, and the current curriculum, enable most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to achieve very well. However, the school does not yet fully meet the needs of some groups of pupils through its curriculum or teaching strategies. Altogether, the school provides very good value for money, and has the capacity to become outstanding.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school that post 16 provision is outstanding. The inclusive sixth form creates opportunities even for students who enter with minimum GCSE grades. Standards not only compare well with national averages, but are much higher than could be predicted from the students' previous results and nearly all students achieve the grades needed for their university and career ambitions. In this they are helped by consistently strong pastoral support and excellent careers guidance. Students' personal development is excellent, and they make a huge contribution to the wider life of the school.

The sixth form is particularly well led and managed, and offers very good value for money. The curriculum responds to the needs of learners and extra-curricular provision is very good. Good use of data helps track and support individual attainment but also contributes to the analysis of subject provision. Students speak very highly of their school, and are effective autonomous learners whose excellent attitudes converge with good teaching to secure high achievement. They reciprocate the friendly respect with which they are treated.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop the curriculum so it is well matched to the wide range of needs and interests of pupils
- ensure that all teaching is informed by the school's own best practice, so that all pupils become confident and resourceful learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

From a starting point which is slightly above average, and includes a wide range of ability, Huntington's pupils make exceptional progress to reach high standards. The school has met, sometimes exceeded, its performance targets as a Technology College. It has met or is steadily closing on its own very challenging targets, which are high in relation to starting points. This is most marked at 14 years of age, where both boys and girls consistently achieve outstanding results. They reach exceptional standards of attainment in English and science and do very well in mathematics. Their achievement by the age of 16 and 18 is also significantly better than the national rate, and in 2005 value-added by this stage was outstanding.

Most pupils, including many of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make significant progress by the time they leave school and some groups, including boys, make outstanding progress. Other groups, including able girls, lower ability learners, and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, do not make as much progress, but it is never less than satisfactory given their starting points. Pupils achieve very well in the majority of subjects, and their performance is exceptional in some, including the school's specialist field of design and technology. The school works relentlessly and effectively to raise standards, so that in mathematics, achievement and attainment have improved markedly at Key Stage 3, although attainment at GCSE is as yet only slightly above the national average.

Pupils aspire to get good grades and build on their achievements. Every pupil, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, collects at least five GCSEs. A large majority achieve high qualifications: in 2005, three quarters of the pupils gained 5 or more A*-C grades. The school is rightly proud of this achievement, which provides a firm foundation for their future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school admits pupils with a broad range of personal qualities, and the great majority adapt well to its very rigorous demands. Attendance is outstanding, punctuality good, and retention on sixth form courses is high. As they move through the school most pupils appreciate the way they are challenged and supported. A small number of pupils finds it harder to conform. Despite extensive support this does lead to some exclusions but teachers make strenuous efforts to re-integrate these pupils, without lowering the level of demand.

Social and moral development are good, with a calm atmosphere around the school, good levels of consideration for others, and good collaboration within lessons. A wide range of classroom and extra-curricular activities enables pupils to develop good spiritual and cultural awareness and contribute to the community. Many also develop

the teamwork and enterprising approach which will equip them well for adult life. However, there is no planned programme to develop these skills.

Students discuss spiritual, moral and legal issues in their taught courses, but do not have the same opportunities to comment on their education. Though the school asks small groups of pupils to consider particular problems, and does listen seriously to their suggestions, the wider body of pupils does not feel that they have a share in this process.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that the quality of teaching and learning is good. The key strengths in teaching are the good subject knowledge of most teachers; effectiveness of most lesson plans; very good relationships, with clear boundaries, in classrooms; high expectations and level of challenge in the majority of lessons; and unusually effective use of homework, that promotes independent learning. In addition to the good teaching, the very good attitudes to work shown by most pupils also make an important contribution to learning, leading to exceptional achievement overall.

There are still areas for improvement in a minority of lessons. In some mixed ability classes, the set work does not match the needs of all pupils. In some lower ability sets, the teaching is not well matched to the needs of learners and the support provided does not place enough emphasis on helping these pupils become more confident and resourceful learners. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support lower ability learners is less than usually seen, in a number of subjects.

The monitoring of teaching is generally rigorous and becoming more consistent across the school. The quality of marking is good overall, although there is still too much variation between subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides a range of courses that are broadly well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. As pupils move up the school, there is opportunity to take advantage of a wider range of courses. A small number of Year 10 and 11 pupils for whom the full range of courses is not appropriate is following an alternative curriculum which better meets their needs. The success of this innovation is reflected in the higher than average attendance rates and the continued engagement of these pupils in a range of GCSE courses. Extra-curricular activities enable pupils to make a positive contribution to their own learning. However, further opportunities in Enterprise education need to be developed.

The specialist college status provides additional opportunities to broaden the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and gives strong support to the school's very good results. Stronger progression links are being developed with sixth form vocational courses. There is no daily act of worship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care provided by the school for its pupils is outstanding. All requirements for child protection are firmly in place and staff monitor pupils' work, behaviour, and parental comments in their planners very carefully for any sign of distress or underachievement. The school demands very high standards of effort and behaviour from every pupil, with a strict consistency which creates a calm, orderly atmosphere. This creates a very positive environment for learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and those with the greatest difficulties make exceptional progress. However, teachers do not always exploit the presence of teaching assistants fully to ensure that every pupil is learning as well as they could.

The school uses a clear target setting system to inform pupils and parents about examination expectations, and how close pupils are to achieving them. It also provides detailed and impartial careers advice so pupils are well informed to make crucial choices as they move up through the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and senior team provide the school with outstanding leadership and management, as shown by the improvement in performance of the school. The school is effectively inclusive, because it has a good track record in supporting all, including more vulnerable or challenging pupils, to reach their potential. It checks how well learners progress in relation to the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, and creates a safe environment in which pupils can concentrate and make progress.

The school's self-evaluation is good: managers and governors share a broadly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Systematic consultation with parents, pupils and staff informs the process, although pupils would like to contribute more. Development plans clearly link priorities to actions and evaluation, and strategies are implemented consistently over time. The school has taken account of previous inspection findings, making use of some idiosyncratic strategies, notably in its close monitoring of expectations of behaviour and progress. These are carefully thought through and consistently applied to achieve the desired outcomes. The headteacher and senior managers evaluate their effect critically, making good use of all available data and external support. Middle and senior management tackle weaknesses effectively so that overall quality of provision is good, and unsatisfactory teaching is rare.

Finances are well managed and the use of resources is good, although some accommodation is unsuitable. Vetting procedures for adults who work with young people are robust, and trained staff carry out child protection responsibilities effectively.

Governors are well informed and discharge their responsibilities well. As a Leading Edge school, Huntington has collaborated with others to raise standards. The school's leadership at all levels has a shared sense of purpose and is both reflective and forward looking: it shows a good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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	No
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	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when I and the other inspectors visited your school recently. Your contributions in lessons, our meetings and around the school were very helpful to us in our inspection work, and we enjoyed and appreciated hearing your considered and well expressed opinions. You and some of your parents had also contributed to surveys earlier in the year, and this too was helpful.

You impressed us very much with your positive attitudes to learning. Your attendance and behaviour is excellent and you show good consideration for other people. Whatever your starting point when you arrive at Huntington, most of you achieve outstandingly well. We think your teachers, and the other adults who help you, give you excellent guidance and teach you well. When you go through difficult times, they do a great deal to support you and they make sure you complete school with a good chance of success in later life. Though you feel the pressure and don't always feel well listened to, you appreciate the good education the school gives you.

We feel there is some room for improvement in the school, to make sure that all of you can learn in ways which suit your needs. The curriculum needs to broaden to fit today's needs and your interests. Some of you who do not make such good progress need better help to become independent and resourceful learners. You all have an important part to play in working with your teachers to reach the very top of your potential and make the school an outstanding one.

We wish you well.