



Hawkley Hall High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106532
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287540
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Coleman HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Carr Lane
School category	Community		Hawkley Hall, Wigan
Age range of pupils	11–16		Lancashire WN3 5NY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 204640
Number on roll (school)	885	Fax number	01942 403570
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs D Taylor
		Headteacher	Mr R Halford
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	6–7 December 2006	287540

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hawkley Hall achieved Specialist Engineering College Status in September 2004. The school serves a local area of mixed housing but is increasingly attracting pupils from other areas in the town. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the start and end of secondary school is very low. In the last two school years there have been a significant number of changes to staff including several senior post holders.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hawkley Hall is an effective school. The emphasis given to displaying pupils' achievements is having a positive effect upon pupils' attitudes to learning. Engineering college status and strong links with industry are celebrated in the prominently displayed slogan, 'achieving quality education together'. The school has achieved Sportsmark and Artsmark. Inspectors were received by courteous, polite and well-behaved pupils. Staff are committed to the schools' ethos of care and consideration for others: they are very good role models and expect pupils to respond in kind.

The majority of pupils enter school with average standards but skills in speaking and listening are lower. The school recognises this and places a high priority upon developing these in Year 7. The school's results in national tests in Year 9 have shown standards to be below average in recent years. In 2006 pupils attained standards which are broadly average and inspectors judge this to be maintained during the current academic year. This is due to the school leadership rightly prioritising improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. There is more still to be done so that teaching is consistently good. Through effective recruitment and retention strategies, governors and the senior leadership team have made many staffing changes, including several senior teaching posts. It is too early to judge their full impact on school improvement. In Key Stage 4, pupils' results in GCSE examinations have been below average for several years and this is especially so for the highest grades. Expectations of the highest attaining pupils are not consistently high enough. In 2006 the schools' results are in line with national comparisons and have exceeded the very challenging targets set by the school. The school's progress in these results is viewed by the local authority as being in the top 25% when compared with similar schools. Overall pupils attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

The school's specialist status as an Engineering College impacts strongly in the curriculum where choices for vocational courses include applied engineering, textiles technology and young apprenticeships in engineering and business administration. Facilities have been improved to the mathematics and science faculties and building development has added to the design and technology and performing arts resources. In addition, pupils feel that the school has made good use of its engineering status with improved equipment in many classes and a school radio station, Hawkley FM.

Driven by strong leadership from the headteacher, the school is committed to a set of expectations called 'The Hawkley Way'. These pervade the very good community spirit which creates a caring climate of mutual respect. Pupils played a big part in the formulation of 'The Hawkley Way' and this good consultation underpins much of the leadership's approach to improvement. The school has worked hard to counteract what it sees as a stereotypical male dominant image which affects boys' underachievement. By introducing dance for boys and involving them in sports projects which use their talents to coach local primary children, the school has successfully raised self-esteem and confidence. Such innovations have resulted in the number of boys who are excluded being significantly reduced. Initiatives such as these illustrate the school's good capacity

to improve. The school's inclusive approach is recognised in the award of 'Inclusion Quality Mark 2006' one of a very few schools to achieve this distinction.

The school's leadership has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses which is matched by the inspection judgements. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. A sound management structure is in place with effective systems for monitoring pupil's performance and the quality of teaching and learning. Action plans resulting from the schools evaluations lack sufficient sharpness to effectively measure the rate and scale of success. Staff work diligently and a culture of improvement is being established by the senior leadership team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the expectations of what the highest attaining pupils should achieve especially in Key Stage 4.
- Improve the consistency of the good quality teaching so that pupils' achievement is improved, especially in Key Stage 3.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils attain average standards and have satisfactory achievement. Most pupils enter school with standards of attainment, as measured by end of Key Stage 2 tests, which are similar to those found nationally. Standardised tests in Year 7 consistently show that skills in speaking and listening are below average. School performance data shows that in recent years pupils have attained below average standards in Key Stage 3. Inspectors judge pupils now make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 so that the standards they attain by the end of Year 9 are just about average. In Key Stage 4 progress is satisfactory for the vast majority of pupils. Standards as shown in the school's GCSE results, which have been below average for several years, are now in line with those found in most schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades are below the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well being are good. Provision for pupil's spiritual, social and moral development is good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils like coming to school as shown by their good attendance and punctuality, Pupils say that they feel safe and free from bullying and relationships are good. This is evident in lessons and when moving between lessons, at breaks and at lunchtime. The Nurture and Inclusion centres provide additional support for pupils especially those who are most vulnerable and this is having a very positive effect on improving behaviour and self-esteem. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss issues which directly concern them through pupil questionnaires and a range of speaking forums. A valuable

buddy system is provided by Year 8 pupils for newcomers to the school and this is particularly supportive. Pupils make a good contribution to the community raising money for local charities such as the local hospice.

There is a strong personal, health and safety programme together with citizenship and this provides pupils with a clear moral and health message. Pupils have a good understanding about the need for healthy lifestyles. Their participation in regular exercise and sport is increasing with the recently awarded Sports mark, and the Junior Sports Leader Award now offered to Year 9 pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Many lessons have good features. Bright stimulating classrooms are commonplace and do much to motivate pupils to learn. Behaviour in lessons is good and well managed. Teachers are well prepared and deliver carefully thought out activities which pupils engage in readily. Planning of lessons is to a shared whole school format which includes appropriate objectives for pupils' learning. There is inconsistency in matching these objectives to levels of challenge built upon the pupils existing skills and knowledge. The expectations of the highest attaining pupils, especially in Key Stage 4 are not high enough in all lessons. Teachers make effective use of computer technology to interest pupils in learning and this results in good levels of concentration.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum has been planned to remove the causes of earlier under-achievement. The impact of this on pupils' standards is at an early stage. Several courses allow small groups of high attaining pupils to take examinations early, or to study for additional examinations before or after school. Results have been very good. A new science curriculum in Year 7, linked to an initiative to develop learning skills, has increased enjoyment and enabled some pupils to reach very high standards. An imaginative approach to work related learning and enterprise has included setting up a company to train pupils in construction skills. Together with a Young Apprenticeship scheme and work based GCSE courses this provides good opportunities for pupils to prepare for their future economic well-being. An extensive range of enrichment activities includes the arts and sport as well as additional study opportunities to give an extra boost to examination results.

The school's specialist status as an engineering college has had a positive impact. Investment in information and communication technology has improved behaviour in lessons and made work more engaging for boys. It has also enhanced pupils' enjoyment through projects such as Hawkley FM.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good standard of care which ensures pupils' safety. Parents are pleased with the way pupils are looked after. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. As a result, they make good progress. Tutors monitor attendance carefully and ensure that pupils are properly prepared to start each session. Heads of faculty use data to set realistic targets for pupils in each subject. Tutors work with pupils to check how well things are going and help them to identify what they need to concentrate on most. Heads of year monitor each pupil's progress and respond quickly when it appears that someone is not doing well enough. Parents get a report each term that says how well their child is doing. The system is well designed. It is constantly being evaluated and improved to iron out inconsistencies. As yet not all pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to reach their target level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory with several strong features. There is clear evidence of improvement and achievement is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the school has a new headteacher who provides strong leadership. The senior leadership team has changed significantly and there have been many appointments at middle management level. Working as a team the senior leaders have put in place effective strategies to raise achievement at Key Stage 4 and to boost the progress of boys. The evolution of the 'Hawkley Way', for example, has created an ethos in which previously poor behaviour is eradicated and is no longer a barrier to learning. The school can demonstrate that this has improved attendance and dramatically reduced the need to exclude pupils.

A rigorous system of monitoring by heads of faculty and the senior leadership team identifies areas of teaching for development. This is supported by good provision for staff training and improvement. There is not always sufficient sharpness in setting targets against which improvement can be measured. The current development focus is on the raising of achievement, especially in Key Stage 3. The evaluation of the various strands of priorities in the school improvement plan is insufficiently rigorous. The impact, especially on teaching and learning, is unable to be measured sharply enough. Good systems are in place to track the progress which pupils make. Inconsistent use is made of this data to ensure that learning activities offer the best level of challenge to all pupils especially the highest attaining. The attainment of the most able pupils is not high enough: apart from that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. Good links enable the school to tap into external support providers which boosts learning and contributes to the improvement agenda.

The governors are kept well informed. As a result they are able to support the school and its work. The governors are exploring ways to increase their involvement in the day-to-day work of the school in order to enhance their ability to ask questions and

challenge the school appropriately. Resources are well deployed. Financial controls are robust. Accommodation is good. Pupils respect their learning environment and there is an absence of litter and graffiti. Specialist status has enhanced the provision for technology. Interactive white boards, for example, are available throughout the school and are generally well used to enhance the quality of learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to your school we would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking to us about your experiences. We would like to tell you what we found out about your school.

- Your school's specialist status as an Engineering College is creating better choices for GCSE and other courses.
- Pupils achieve average standards and make satisfactory progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving.
- We think that your behaviour is good.
- The senior staff and the headteacher work very well to improve your school.
- Your school includes everyone in as many activities as possible.
- You told us you feel safe in school and that staff are approachable, caring and helpful. We agree.
- We think those of you who reach the highest standards should be given more challenging work so that you achieve even more highly in your GCSE exams.
- More lessons need to be of good quality so that pupils in Key Stage 3 especially achieve more highly.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make Hawkley Hall High School an even better place to be.