



Harton Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108726
Local Authority South Tyneside
Inspection number 288168
Inspection date 2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lesley Aers

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Lisle Road |
| School category | Community | | South Shields, Tyne and Wear |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | NE34 6DL |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0191 4564226 |
| Number on roll (school) | 1365 | Fax number | 0191 4271478 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr Scott Duffy |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Ken Gibson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 October 2001 | | |

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|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harton Technology College is larger than average and it is over-subscribed. A much lower than average proportion of students is from minority ethnic groups. The area the school serves has some pockets of extreme deprivation. The number of students on free school meals is well above the national average. The school has been a designated Technology College since 1996 and has now been invited to apply for a second and a third area of specialism as a 'High Performing Specialist School'. It is a pilot 'extended school'. Much of the accommodation is old and cramped, but there is a new information and communication technology (ICT) block and a new sports centre and fitness suite. The school has gained the Investors in People Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Harton Technology College is an outstanding school. The headteacher, together with his strong senior team, has created very effective systems and structures in order to raise standards. These have been put in place with proper consultation and skilful management. Students are well-motivated. Behaviour is excellent; attendance is good and improving. Teaching and learning are outstanding, with many lessons of the highest quality. Standards are above average and students' achievement is outstanding. Improvement in GCSE results is well above the national trend. The curriculum is outstanding, with enough flexibility and variety to enable students to pursue the most appropriate course. This is a highly inclusive school with the same level of care, guidance and support given to all students. Most students, at all levels of ability, make excellent progress. The development of students' skills for their future economic well-being is also exemplary. The school has highly effective links with external groups, including churches, local businesses, universities and other schools. The views of parents are overwhelmingly favourable. Occasionally, there is a negative comment on a specific issue, but this is counter-balanced by far more which have a positive view of the same matter. The school has capitalised on opportunities offered by technology college status and provides excellent value for money. Issues raised at the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying where provision is outstanding, and where improvements might still be made. The capacity of leadership and management to make such improvements is excellent, due to a rigorous process of self-evaluation.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement. The school has already identified aspects, which are continually being improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Students' achievement is outstanding and standards are above average. Students enter the school with standards around the national average, with few at the higher levels. They leave with results above the national average. GCSE results have risen from 40% 5 or more A*-C grades in 2001 to 70% in 2006. This is well above the national trend of improvement. In 2005, the school's results showed that students added good value to their prior attainment. In 2006, their achievement is outstanding, as their results are significantly higher than expected. Students of differing abilities and backgrounds, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, achieve equally well. The progress of boys is particularly impressive, as their results are much closer to those of girls than is the case nationally. The 2006 results in national tests taken by students at age 14 are significantly higher than expected in mathematics and science, and especially in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of students are excellent. Students are proud of their school and are well motivated in lessons. Attendance for the last full year was above average. Behaviour is excellent overall. The use of the learning support centre has been very successful in reducing exclusions. Students generally feel safe and say that they can turn to an adult for help if they need it. They are well-informed about safe practices and healthy life-styles. There are healthy meal options at lunchtime, and a wide range of extra-curricular sport and fitness activities. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They take responsibility, for example, as members of the staff-student liaison committee, and changes have been made in school based on their recommendations. They are committed to charity work and are aware of global responsibilities, giving complete attention to a very good assembly on the earthquake in Kashmir. Preparation for students' future economic well-being is exemplary, through a comprehensive programme of work experience, careers guidance, links with local organisations and development of essential skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent overall. No lessons are unsatisfactory and the vast majority are good, with many that are exemplary. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Students are well aware of their target levels and are given clear advice on how to improve. Planning for students at all levels of ability is good, enabling them to make good and often outstanding progress. Teachers have clear lesson objectives and success criteria, which they return to at the end of the lesson for students to review. This provides good on-going assessment of how well students are doing. Students are involved in self-evaluation and peer assessment so they have a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Staff use strategies to maximise learners' participation, for example through lively group work. They also give good opportunities for independent work, especially making use of students' skills with ICT. Consequently these skills are developed well. Students enjoy talking about their work, giving reasons for the choices they have made, for example in their creative assignments in art and music. The use of ICT in the classroom has been a focus of staff development, and this has been very successful in engaging students more fully.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum for its students. In Years 7 to 9, groupings are carefully established to ensure that each student follows the most appropriate programme. Schemes of work are organised on a modular basis so that

students get regular updates on their progress. In Years 10 and 11, students can choose from a wide range of options, and they report that the school works very hard to make their chosen combinations possible. The curriculum is enhanced by the specialist subjects resulting from technology college status, such as separate sciences, GNVQ science and statistics. Students make good use of ICT across the curriculum and are confident in their skills. There is extensive vocational provision and a theme of enterprise is promoted across subjects. The work-related learning pathway is enjoyed by students who take part. Careful choice of examination courses that match students' needs has led to improved results, for example in GCSE English. A wide range of popular extra-curricular activities, including sport, drama, music and extended school opportunities such as the breakfast club and homework club, supports students' achievement and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support for learners are outstanding. This starts with transition from primary school, which is highly effective. The personal development of each student is monitored closely through the pastoral system. There is very good support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities, with specific, but unobtrusive, support being given in class by associate teachers. There is a detailed system to track student progress, which highlights underachievement as soon as it occurs. This has been a major factor in the school's upward trend in results. Review meetings are held for students and parents together. Students are given extensive guidance as they move towards making their choice of courses for Years 10 and 11 and information evenings are held. Similarly, all their choices are made clear to them as they approach the post-16 phase. This includes information on 'aspirational careers' and visits to a university. All staff are trained in child protection, and procedures relating to safeguarding are followed meticulously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school follows a rigorous process of review and self-evaluation at all levels of the organisation. Judgements in the school's self-evaluation are accurate. Departmental reviews lead to action points in order to improve teaching and learning still further. Staff are very well supported through opportunities for professional development. The performance of all groups of students is monitored very effectively and this has led directly to the outstanding results in 2006. In the past, targets have been set and exceeded, well above the most challenging predictions, and will now be set still higher. The senior leadership group works together as an excellent team. The headteacher shows a calm determination to raise standards even higher. There is a shared vision for the school, which includes its new bid for second and third specialisms, and also its future in a wider 16-19 collaborative. The relationship with the governing body is one of openness and

transparency. Governors are very well-informed on all aspects of standards and provision, and they are in a position to express their views clearly on future plans. Improvements have been made since the last inspection, in particular the impressive new sports hall and fitness suite, which is a valuable resource for the whole community. Technology college money has been spent according to clear principles to benefit students in school, especially in the provision of ICT to increase opportunities for personalised learning. Value for money is excellent.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 1 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 1 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 1 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 1 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 1 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 1 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 1 |
| 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

Harton Technology College

Lisle Road

South Shields

Tyne and Wear

NE34 6DL

2 November 2006

Dear Students

We enjoyed our visit to your school last week. Our particular thanks go to those of you we interviewed and spoke to about your work and aspects of school life. We were impressed by your outstanding behaviour and the interest you showed in your work. Your staff-student liaison committee works hard on your behalf, and changes have been made according to its recommendations. This is one example of how well members of your school community work together.

Harton Technology College is an outstanding school. It achieves excellent results, especially in 2006. This is due to the high-quality teaching you receive, and to your own efforts.

You are being very well-prepared for your life when you leave school, and receiving good advice and information on your future choices. You are developing key skills that you will need in your future work. We were very impressed by your skill in using ICT.

Your headteacher and his staff provide exciting opportunities in the curriculum. You are also able to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities such as drama, music and sport. We know that you are committed to helping others, and that you take part in charity work. You have learned about the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise.

Your buildings are no longer big enough for such a large school, but your headteacher and his staff are working hard to bring about improvements.

• Yours sincerely

Lesley Aers

Lead inspector