



Hagley Roman Catholic High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116994
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 290696
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Matharu HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Brake Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Hagley
Age range of pupils	11–18		Stourbridge DY8 2XL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01562 883193
Number on roll (school)	1009	Fax number	01562 881820
Number on roll (6th form)	166		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Elaine Yates
		Headteacher	Terence Hammond
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	1–2 November 2006	290696

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hagley Catholic High School is an average-sized comprehensive school serving a wide area of Worcestershire and beyond, within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Overall, there are marginally more boys than girls. Attainment on entry is above average and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. The school was designated as a specialist school in Visual and Performing Arts in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hagley Catholic High School provides a good standard of education. It is well respected in the community and demand for places is high. The school provides pupils with good care and support, has high expectations of pupils, and is reflective about its performance. The strong Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of school life and is evident in pupils' very positive attitudes and behaviour. The sixth form is a strength of the school.

Pupils enter the school with above average attainment. Standards in Key Stage 3 results and at GCSE are good. Results in 2005 at Key Stage 3 and GCSE were surprisingly lower than might have been expected, given pupils' starting points. In particular, the underachievement at Key Stage 4 in 2005 was a key issue for the school which prompted appropriate interventions, resulting in improved results in 2006. Standards are above average at all key stages and pupils are achieving well overall. However, the monitoring roles of subject and year leaders are underdeveloped and, although well focused attention on staff development has given a boost to improving the quality of teaching, there is still too much variation between subjects. The quality of marking is variable. Excellent practice, for example, in English, shows pupils clearly how to improve further. However, on too much work comments are superficial or non-existent. The school is well placed to assist pupils to make better progress with the more consistent use of pupil tracking and monitoring currently being developed.

Pupils speak very warmly of their school and really enjoy their learning. Their personal development is outstanding. Relationships with teachers are very strong. One girl commented, 'Our teachers want us to do well in our work and also care for us as people', which typifies pupils' views. Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary and they show considerable respect for each other. They feel well cared for and safe in school and are quick to point out their school's many strengths. Instances of bullying are rare and pupils have confidence that should this occur, it would be dealt with swiftly. Parents hold the school in high regard and are positive about its strengths. A minority feel that the school does not consult them sufficiently.

There is much good teaching which reflects improved progress in lessons. The curriculum is planned carefully and meets pupils' needs. It has been significantly enhanced by specialist status in the Visual and Performing Arts, enabling curriculum enrichment through musical, artistic and aesthetic experiences for pupils which are impacting positively on their enjoyment of school.

Good leadership from the headteacher and effective self-evaluation have provided the school with a clear picture of its performance that has led to appropriate actions being taken to improve weaknesses. The issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is an effective and inclusive sixth form. A large proportion of Year 11 students continue into the sixth form and retention rates are high. Students value their sixth form experience, particularly the high quality of relationships, the support provided by teachers and the excellent study facilities. Standards are above average and students make good progress because of the consistently good teaching they receive. The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding. Advice and guidance are good; however, students feel that the information about sixth form courses could be further improved by sampling lessons before choices are made. The sixth form is well led and there are good links with another local school to extend the curricular opportunities available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and progress through more consistent monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress.
- Ensure that marking of work consistently shows pupils how to improve.
- Develop the role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluation to ensure a consistent approach across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good overall. Although standards in recent years in Key Stage 3 are above average, there have been inconsistencies in performance between subjects. This trend is seen in both the 2005 and 2006 test results. Similarly, in Key Stage 4, standards are above average but there are significant variations between subjects. In 2006, results at both key stages improved. When these latest results are compared with the above average attainment on entry, they represented improved progress being made. Pupils with learning disabilities make similar progress to other pupils.

In 2005, pupils' progress in science at Key Stage 3 was inadequate. The progress made by higher attaining and middle attaining pupils by the end of Key Stage 4 was also below expectations. Overall, the rate of progress pupils made at both key stages showed a declining trend between 2003 and 2005. The school responded to these issues and implemented a variety of strategies to arrest the decline in achievement. In some underperforming subjects, this has involved staffing changes, professional development activities and good use of external advice from the local authority to improve teaching. As a result, progress has improved.

Standards in the sixth form are above average and are rising steadily. There are no underachieving subject areas and in the majority of subjects students are making better than expected progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and this area is a strength of the school. Pupils are very happy to come to school and attendance is above average. Right from Year 7, they feel very safe in school and know who to approach if they have any particular needs. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary and the quality of relationships with other pupils and with staff is particularly strong and underpins the very strong Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils have a very high level of respect for each other, for example, they are able to leave their bags unattended around the school and require minimal adult supervision when not in lessons. Pupils are very appreciative of the wide range of opportunities to take responsibility that are offered and in particular the commitment of teachers in providing these opportunities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Opportunities for spiritual and moral reflection are very effectively threaded throughout the life of the school and underpin the core of the pupils' experience. Pupils develop an excellent sense of social awareness and interaction and a very clear sense of right and wrong.

Pupils are fully involved in the community through an impressive school council, through their fundraising activities for charity and their concern for their own and the wider environment; for example, a group runs a Fair Trade shop. Workplace skills are well developed through opportunities to take responsibility for the welfare of others, in particular, the sixth form mentoring scheme of Year 7 pupils and the Year 11 prefect system. A very strong school focus on promoting healthy lifestyles is reflected in the high level of pupils' involvement in the extensive range of sporting activities and in the high uptake of the healthy food options in the school canteen.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is stronger in Years 7 to 9 and the sixth form than in Years 10 and 11. The school has done much to improve teaching and learning but the full impact on pupils' progress has not been felt until recently. The school is beginning to make good use of the expertise among staff to spread good practice. However, there is no whole-school system which requires heads of subject to monitor lessons on a regular basis. The school is developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in its 'Virtual Workspace' to enable teachers to provide and evaluate pupils' work outside of the school day.

Good relationships, lively, engaging teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes combine to produce lessons in which pupils learn and achieve well and make good progress.

Teachers have high expectations, set suitably demanding work and ask probing, challenging questions. In these lessons, pupils clearly enjoy their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and they achieve as well as other pupils. In a few otherwise satisfactory lessons, there are still some weaknesses when teachers do not check pupils' progress through the lesson, or plan work which is suitable for the full range of capabilities in their classes. In a few lessons, pupils are not involved actively enough in their learning.

The quality of marking is variable. Excellent practice, for example, in English, shows pupils clearly how to improve further. On too much work, however, comments are superficial or non-existent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils well. It is broad and balanced for Years 7 to 9. For Years 10 and 11, there is a good range of GCSE subjects, including a small number of vocational GCSE courses. Further vocational courses involving local colleges have been successful in motivating disaffected pupils. In the sixth form, there is a good range of academic A-level courses. Effective collaboration with a neighbouring school provides additional A-level and vocational courses. Take-up of such vocational courses is, however, low.

The school's specialist status has extended the range of arts and musical activities, and has already introduced vocational GCSEs in art and design and has firm plans to develop vocational opportunities in performing arts. Pupils have good opportunities to develop work-related skills. The curriculum is significantly enriched by the provision of a very extensive range of clubs and sporting activities, and a variety of local and overseas residential opportunities and visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. There are good links with primary schools to ensure a smooth transition to secondary school and Year 7 pupils appreciate these arrangements. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and individual needs are very clearly identified. The school has robust arrangements to guide and support vulnerable pupils. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is good with many pupils participating in specialist enrichment activities.

The school's pastoral system supports learners very well and enables all pupils to feel very safe and secure in the school. Risk assessments are carried out effectively and arrangements for child protection are thorough and comprehensive. The procedures for academic monitoring have been thoroughly revised in the last 18 months and now form a satisfactory basis for establishing clear learning targets to maximise pupils'

potential, particularly in Years 10 and 11. However, the evaluation and use of the assessment data have yet to be securely embedded in the school's planning and monitoring structures; there are currently some inconsistencies within departments and the contribution made by heads of year is still to be developed. Pupils' economic well-being is enhanced by the ICT provision and the many opportunities for work-based learning throughout the curriculum.

Careers advice and work experience opportunities are timely and extensive. The options guidance in Years 9 and 11 effectively supports progression into the next stage of education or training.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides effective leadership and, together with the senior leadership team, has a secure view of the school's strengths and weaknesses with a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. The senior team is committed to school improvement through raising achievement. The team has been reorganised following the last inspection and has an appropriate focus on continued improvements in teaching and learning as its main priority. A careful analysis of the factors leading to the disappointing results of 2005, followed by a number of appropriate interventions, has resulted in improved results and there are indications that these will be sustained.

Monitoring and evaluating procedures are developing securely, although these need embedding and extending further in terms of the role and effectiveness of middle leaders. The strong focus on continuous staff development is having a positive effect on improving the quality of teaching across the school. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, are strong "critical friends" and provide clear strategic direction for the school which has standards and achievement, in addition to pupils' welfare, at its core.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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?	1	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	1	
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?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	2
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	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and appreciated the contact we had with you. A particular thank you to those pupils who talked with us; we found your comments very helpful and interesting and your confidence impressive. You were certainly excellent ambassadors for your school! We found that your school is providing you with a good standard of education. The curriculum is good and provides lots of enjoyable and interesting activities. You are taught well and you work hard in lessons. Most of you really enjoy life at school and appreciate the many opportunities provided. You told us that your school has many strengths and we agree:

- Your school is well led and your teachers want you to do well.
- You are well cared for and your relationships with your teachers are very good.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent.
- The positive and encouraging atmosphere in school is helping you to develop very impressive personal and social skills.
- There are many varied clubs and activities which you appreciate and enjoy, at lunchtimes and after school.

We think your school can improve even further. We have asked Mr Hammond and your teachers to think about:

- Developing ways of monitoring your progress in lessons more carefully, so that teachers can identify when you need more help and make sure you are doing as well as you possibly can.
- Making sure your work is consistently marked with helpful comments which tell you how to improve further.

You can help by responding positively to the advice on your work and putting this into action in your next piece.

Overall, we think your school has a very clear understanding of how to improve further and we look forward to hearing how you are doing in the future.