



Hassenbrook School Specialist Technology College

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 115365
LEA THURROCK LEA
Inspection number 294397
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Ken Shooter HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Hassenbrook Road
School category	Foundation		SS17 0NS
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01375 671566
Number on roll	799	Fax number	01375 644138
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Sir.Graham Bright
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2001	Headteacher	Mr. Richard Glasby

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	28 June 2006 - 29 June 2006	294397

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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

Hassenbrook is a mixed comprehensive school situated on the north bank of the Thames Estuary close to an area of concentrated commercial and industrial activity. It was designated as a Technology College by the DfES in 2003. This means that it has to set and meet targets for raising standards in design and technology (D&T), science and mathematics and use strengths in these subjects to help raise achievement more widely. It receives about 100,000 pounds a year in extra funding to do this. It has gradually increased in size over the last 10 years, but is smaller than the average comprehensive school. The number of boys is greater than the girls in Year 11 but about equal in the lower school. A high proportion of students are of White British background. A small number of students speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is just below the national average. The percentage of students who have learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average and is significantly higher when students with statements are included. The school has recently gained Investors in People re-accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge the school's effectiveness to be satisfactory. This differs from the school's own view because inspectors found variability in the standards achieved in some subjects, including those in the technology specialism, and inconsistent impact of improvement strategies. A large proportion of students make good progress during their first three years but there is some underachievement, particularly among boys in Key Stage 4. Overall standards at the end of Year 11 compare well with similar schools and are close to national averages. The school is committed to developing its specialist designation and has made significant improvements to information and communication technology (ICT) provision to support learning. Whilst lessons are generally effective in enabling students to learn well there are some instances where poor behaviour is not adequately dealt with, and therefore the more able students are not challenged sufficiently. Curriculum provision is generally good and the Key Stage 4 curriculum now includes more vocational and work related opportunities. The school promotes a climate of inclusion; care, support and guidance are good. The school has worked hard to reduce unauthorised absence and most students' attendance is good. Over the last two years the school has undertaken a thorough evaluation of its work. This has revealed some major challenges but there is now a clear vision, backed up by demonstrable capacity to improve. The headteacher provides clear leadership and direction and has put structures and systems into place to facilitate improvements. He is well supported by his new senior management team. Aspects needing attention at the time of the last inspection have been addressed except that assessment needs strengthening. Governors support the school well and hold it to account. The school works purposefully with other local schools in the Excellence Cluster and with child support agencies. However, the involvement of parents in the life of the school is rather limited. Resources are deployed effectively and the school provides satisfactory value for money overall, but not currently in relation to outcomes from the specialist school grant for technology.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in D&T. - Improve the quality and consistency of marking, feedback to students and target setting. - Address the problems of poor behaviour in some lessons, and deal with verbal bullying more effectively. - Disseminate good practice in teaching and learning more widely. - Encourage parents to be more involved in the work of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory with a number of significant strengths, particularly in relation to the progress the majority of students make during their time at the school. A large majority of students enter the school with lower than average standards of literacy and overall attainment. During their first three years at the school

they make good progress. At the end of Year 9 in 2005, standards in English and mathematics were close to national averages. Data show that boys and girls make equally good progress to this point. Progress was sustained in mathematics in Years 10 and 11 but not to the same extent in English. Some boys whose attainment is lower than that expected for their age do not make sufficient progress in Years 10 and 11. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress during their five years in the school. Generally, standards of attainment at the end of Year 11 are close to the national average for the proportion of students achieving five or more higher grades at GCSE. The proportion of students leaving with no qualification is better than the national figure. Overall, girls performed better than boys in every subject except science and music. The school sets itself challenging targets to raise standards. In 2005, however, of the specialist subjects, only mathematics met its GCSE target and only mathematics is clearly contributing to improving standards. Trends in the performance of specialist subjects over the last three years show that mathematics and science are continuing to improve their GCSE performance but results have seriously declined in D&T.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, and good in some respects. It is evident from many students' good attendance, high take up of extra-curricular activities and good progress that they enjoy their education. The majority of students respect one another and their teachers, and are courteous and confident. However, despite teachers' prompt action in dealing with reported incidents of bullying, a significant minority of students and parents expressed concerns over incidents of low level verbal intimidation. They are also concerned about the poor behaviour of a few students which hinders the learning of others. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. An appointment of a permanent head of religious education has strengthened provision for spiritual and cultural aspects. However, these are not as well developed as the moral and social elements, which are good. Students make a significant contribution to the life of the school and to the local and wider community. For example, Year 10 runs a voluntary summer vacation scheme. The school council makes a useful but limited contribution to the life of the school. Some students feel that their views are not fully taken into account. Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The drinking of water is allowed in lessons and all students have two hours of good quality physical education each week. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being through careers events, work experience, Connexions support, summer schools and college taster days. In citizenship, students learn the principles of budgeting and good financial management.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. They are good or better when, for instance, teachers plan, sequence and pace a lesson well, make objectives clear, judiciously vary the activities and set students suitably challenging tasks. Effective learning also occurs when teachers inspire students with their enthusiasm, address individual learning needs, encourage independent learning and combine good relationships with relaxed but firm control. Inspectors saw some very good practice in art, drama and mathematics. In less effective lessons, teachers' expectations of students, both in achievement and behaviour, are too low. In some lessons, the poor behaviour of a few students disturbs the learning of all, or teaching does not challenge students leaving them uninterested and restless. There is a well organised system of lesson observations, which is helping to improve the quality of teaching. The school has started disseminating its best practice in teaching and learning but this process is not yet sufficiently focused or effective. There is inconsistency in the use of target setting, in assessment practice and in setting homework. The staff have produced some attractive and imaginative displays in classrooms and corridors, to provide an environment conducive to learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum and other activities is good overall and generally meets students' needs. The school has addressed the statutory curricular deficiencies identified in the last inspection, although citizenship needs further development. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well provided for. Creditably, gifted and talented students are offered opportunities for accelerated learning and several enrichment outlets. The school has recognised and started to address its need to develop literacy throughout the school to raise achievement, especially for boys. ICT provision is good. Senior students respond well to the many opportunities given them to undertake responsibilities. Educational continuity is well established. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has been broadened to provide more vocational opportunities. This includes some courses in specialist subjects. However, a few students of below average ability are not fully engaged by the current Key Stage 4 provision. Education provided for health and safety is effective and the school offers a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. The take-up of these is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support provided are good. The school makes flexible and effective provision for the needs of individual students. Vulnerable students and those with behaviour problems receive good support. Staff with responsibility for supporting

students with learning difficulties work hard to help them achieve their full potential. Pastoral mentoring is effective in helping students to improve their attitude and approach to work. The quality and accessibility of advice and guidance on choice of subjects, careers and opportunities for subsequent phases of education is good. Additional support is provided for those with special learning needs. The school provides a safe environment in which students can learn. The local child protection agreement is fully implemented. Links with outside child support agencies are very good. Parents receive regular communications about school events and the progress of students. However, too few parents are actively involved in the life of the school, and a minority feel that their views and concerns are not sought nor fully taken into account. Health and safety regulations are closely observed and accidents are few and far between.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has introduced a clear and challenging vision for continuous improvement in the school. The senior management team has recently been re-organised with more clearly defined responsibilities, but it is too early to see the full impact on improvements in teaching, learning and standards. The school's recent self-evaluation is thorough although it tends to be slightly generous in its judgements. It clearly identifies key areas for development and planning procedures are generally good. Some steps have been taken to seek the views of parents but more work remains to be done. The quality of middle management is variable and school policies are not implemented consistently in all departments. There has been an increase in monitoring and evaluation by the heads of department but this is not fully effective across all subject areas. Recruitment and retention of well qualified staff has been challenging for the school over the past two years, but, after much hard work by the headteacher, the school will be fully staffed in September. Support staff are increasingly integrated into school life. Governors are well informed of the school's progress and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. They monitor progress and support the headteacher and staff well by working in a spirit of trust. The school's financial management is secure and value for money is satisfactory overall except in relation to use of the specialist school grant because of underperformance in D&T. The school has addressed most of the issues in the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The school buildings and grounds are well managed and provide an attractive learning environment.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the chance to talk with you about your work, values, interests and hopes for the future. This is a summary of what we think you might like to know about our view of the school. You will also be able to read the full inspection report when it arrives at the school. What we liked about your school: - A high proportion of students make good progress during their time at the school. - Many students have good records of attendance and enjoy their education. - You achieve well when teachers make lesson objectives clear, set the pace of learning and inspire you with their enthusiasm. - The majority of students respect one another and their teachers. - The quality of the curriculum and other activities is good. - Care, guidance and support are good. - The headteacher and his staff are committed to making improvements and raising standards. - Becoming a technology college has improved resources especially ICT provision. - The school buildings and grounds are well managed and provide an attractive environment. What we have asked your school to do now: - Raise standards in D&T. - Improve the quality and consistency of marking, feedback to students on how well you are doing, and make sure you are clear about how to improve your work so you can reach your targets. - Deal with poor behaviour in some lessons, and any instances of bullying, especially where individuals feel intimidated by verbal abuse. - Spread good practice in teaching and learning across the school. - Encourage your parents to be more involved in the work of the school. We know that your headteacher is committed to improving the school for you and he has the full support of all staff in doing so. You can help teachers to make this a successful school by attending regularly, behaving well and continuing to work hard.