



Hartshill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125766
LEA Warwickshire
Inspection number 296374
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Gilbert AI AI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Type of school | Secondary | School address | Church Road |
| School category | Foundation | | Hartshill |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 16 | | Nuneaton, Warwickshire CV10 ONA |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 024 76392237 |
| Number on roll | 1010 | Fax number | 024 76394641 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Chris Smart |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 March 2004 | Headteacher | Mrs Christine Connearn |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hartshill School is a similar size to most other secondary schools. Attainment on entry is broadly average. A significant proportion of students come from areas with high levels of social and economic deprivation. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are close to national averages. Almost all of the students are from White British backgrounds and from English speaking families. The acting headteacher is assisted by an executive headteacher who oversees the loose federation between Hartshill and Eton schools. A permanent headteacher has been appointed and will start at the beginning of the new academic year. As a result of weaknesses identified during the last inspection, an Interim Executive Board was put in place to replace the governors. When Hartshill School was inspected in March 2004 it was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the students' standards and achievement.

The school judges its overall effectiveness as satisfactory. However, it is the inspectors' view that although the school has made good progress over the last two terms, the legacy of poor provision is still having an impact on standards. Hence, the overall effectiveness is inadequate. Standards and achievement are inadequate, particularly in Key Stage 4, and there is a small, but persistent, proportion of weak teaching. Overall the quality of teaching and learning, the students' attitudes and behaviour, attendance and punctuality, and the leadership and management are all now at satisfactory levels but will have to be sustained over a much longer period to have any marked effect on standards. The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support, and the students mix well in a reasonably calm and tolerant atmosphere.

The acting headteacher and the executive headteacher, the latter who started working with the school in March 2006, have quickly gained the confidence and respect of the staff. They have led the school well through an intensive process of self-evaluation. This has given them a generally accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The new leaders have given the school a clear vision of its future and how to reach its potential. The senior leadership team has shown that it has the means to make the improvements necessary in the school. Subject leadership is good in some areas, but variable elsewhere.

The students' standards of attainment and progress in lessons have improved. However, too many students still achieve less than they should in national tests and examinations. This is often because work set is insufficiently challenging and targets are not high enough. Because of this the school provides inadequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise students' achievement by improving their learning and the quality of teaching.
- Improve the effectiveness of some subject leaders in order to achieve the school's goals.
- Set more challenging targets and use them effectively to plan for students' learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Students' achievement is inadequate. Standards are too low and have been so for several years. Attainment when students start the school in Year 7 is typical for this age. Most students make the expected progress to reach broadly average standards overall between Years 7 to 9, but this masks differences in performance between

individual subjects. In 2005, the national test results in Year 9 were broadly average in English but well below average in mathematics. The unconfirmed results for 2006 show an improvement in mathematics results. Unconfirmed results in science were marginally better than those in 2005, but still considerably below the school's target and below the 2005 national average. Literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped.

The GCSE results overall were exceptionally low in 2005. The majority of students did far less well than might have been expected, particularly when account is taken of performance in the national tests when they were in Year 6 which were at the national average. Progress from students' starting points when they join the school has therefore been inadequate. The school's predictions for its overall performance in 2006 indicate that standards are rising. However, they are not rising fast enough to ensure that students reach the standards they are capable of attaining or to bring standards closer to the national averages.

Over the past two terms, the school has implemented suitable checking systems to monitor the progress of students on a regular basis. This is helping to identify students who may be in danger of not meeting their targets. However, the targets that are set for students are not challenging enough to bring about a substantial improvement in the school's results.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development and well-being of the students are satisfactory. Students value the good relationships in the school and enjoy lessons when they are appropriately challenged. During the inspection the students in the main were well behaved and polite both in and out of lessons. Exclusions remain high but there have been fewer in recent months. Attendance is now close to the national average and punctuality at the start of the day has improved. Students feel safe at school. If they have concerns, they are readily able to recognise those members of staff they should turn to for support.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Students develop a deeper understanding of the diversity of the community in the local town and more widely in the country. This includes their own heritage and faith through their learning in several subjects including particularly religious education, humanities, art, music and English. Students understand right from wrong, have a strong sense of community and wholeheartedly participate in fundraising projects and school events. Older students conscientiously fulfil prefect duties and others assist in the library and with other school functions.

The school council is valued by students as an effective means by which to make their views known. Students have a secure understanding of the value of adopting safe practices and a healthy lifestyle. Although boys in particular do not always make healthy choices in the canteen, a new range of healthy school meals is on offer. All students are given opportunities for work experience and, together with other aspects

of the curriculum, particularly citizenship, they are helped effectively to develop their economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is currently satisfactory. It has improved well since the last inspection in March 2004 when judged to be poor. However, as yet, the improvement has been too recent to have any marked effect on standards.

The school has a core of talented teachers who know their subjects well and whose high expectations of students are reflected in their teaching. In these lessons a range of good resources is used to promote different ways of teaching and learning as seen in some English and science lessons. However, the quality of learning varies considerably between lessons and this is hindering the school's efforts to further improve standards. In a number of lessons teachers do not give sufficient attention to the learning needs of individual students. In these lessons planning is focused on what teachers will do rather than how students will learn. Some teaching fails to engage the students' interest and does not inspire them to try harder. Behaviour management in most lessons is now at least satisfactory, but the rigidity in some of the lessons prevents students from interacting and participating fully. The school monitors student progress adequately but, although some teachers use this information effectively to plan lessons, this practice is not yet consistent across the school.

Marking is generally up to date but, on occasions, does not indicate clearly how students may make improvements. Homework is set and marked regularly by some teachers. However, the fact that this is not always the case led to negative comments by students and by some parents in the questionnaires used by the school to gauge their opinions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is broad, generally balanced, and complies with all statutory requirements. A review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum has taken place to ensure provision meets the needs of all groups of students, including those who are gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Modifications to the pathways into Key Stage 4 and then to post-16 education are in place for the new academic year. This should provide suitable courses together with a range of vocational options. Currently the teaching week does not meet the recommended 25 hours at Key Stage 4 but there are firm plans to rectify this. The drive to raise literacy standards across the curriculum is having too little impact. Levels of numeracy are low but tackling this has not been a focus of the school's work.

The school provides a satisfactory range of enrichment activities with sport featuring strongly. Many students attend at least one activity. However, the school does not

monitor the impact of this involvement on students' skills and achievement. A comprehensive programme of personal, health and social education supports the development of the students as responsible individuals. Careers guidance and the work experience programme prepare students well for employment and are much appreciated by them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision for care, guidance and support is satisfactory. All the required procedures for health and safety and for child protection are in place. The students know who they can approach should they have a concern, and they feel they have suitable advice to support the choices they make at the end of Year 9 and for their future education or training. The systems in place are satisfactorily complemented by the teaching programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The school uses well a range of external, professional services to support students who are vulnerable.

Heads of year and form tutors play a valuable role in helping students set targets, and in evaluating progress to help spot and remedy weaknesses. This is starting to help reduce underachievement across the school, but past poor provision means that there is still much to do to raise standards significantly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Following the departure of the former headteacher, there have been three acting headteachers in five terms. This has slowed the rate of progress. The appointment of an executive headteacher in the spring of 2006 has given the school much needed continuity and he is already working with the recently appointed substantive headteacher. With the acting headteacher, a clear vision for the direction of the school is evident which has focused the senior leadership team on achieving the improvements needed. As a result, the team members are clear about their roles in achieving the goals set. The school actively seeks the views of students and parents and incorporates these into plans for the future whenever possible. Through the generally effective process of self-evaluation, the school has a realistic understanding in most areas of how well it is doing. A thorough survey of the quality of teaching has accurately identified the key weaknesses. Effective training and support have been provided. Because of the strengths in the leadership team, the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, the students' attitudes and behaviour, and encouraging signs of better students' progress, inspectors believe that the school has the means to improve well.

The leadership of subjects is variable, but satisfactory overall. Recent changes to the way senior staff manage subject leaders have clarified ways of working and have led to improvements. However, where the leadership of subjects is weakest, this has yet to have sufficient impact upon the quality of teaching, and there is variability in the

effectiveness of planning for learning, the quality of marking, and the students' progress in lessons.

Governance is good. The members of the Interim Executive Board recognise the areas for development in the school. They hold managers to account for its performance well. Financial management is sound but too many students still achieve less than they should in national tests and examinations. Hence, value for money is inadequate.

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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 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 | 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? | 4 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 4 | 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 | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 3 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 | 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 | 3 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 4 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | 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

I would like to thank you for the way you welcomed my colleagues, Mrs Greenfield, Mrs Walker, Mr Bannon and myself to your school when we visited recently. We met and talked to quite a few of you during our two days at the school. We watched some of your lessons and looked at the quality of your work. Our main conclusions were that Hartshill School is improving but there is much still to be done to ensure that you all achieve as well as you should.

As you know, your school has required special measures over the last two years to help it provide a better standard of education for you. Your acting headteacher, the executive headteacher and the senior staff are working hard to make improvements where they are needed. The staff at your school have worked hard to make the improvements that were necessary and we feel that the quality of teaching and your learning has got better. We think you generally get on well with each other and that most of you come to school prepared to work hard and learn. We were very pleased that attendance and punctuality are better since the last time the school was inspected.

There are still some things we feel that the school could do better. Your results in tests and examinations are still below where they should be, particularly in your GCSEs. The school needs to improve the targets it sets for you to make them more challenging. This is not so evident in some subjects where you told us you knew you were being made to work hard, but it is in others. A team of inspectors will come back next year to check on your school's progress.

The main areas where we thought the school should improve further were:

to improve the performance of students in both Key Stages 3 and 4

to improve the effectiveness of middle management

to set more challenging targets to enable you to achieve your full potential.

Good luck in the future.