

Hebburn Comprehensive School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108731
Local Authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	301366
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Harris HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	980
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert Pinder
Headteacher	Mr Niall Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Campbell Park Road Hebburn Tyne and Wear NE31 2QU
Telephone number	0191 4833199
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Age group	11–16
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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

Hebburn School is an 11–16 comprehensive school just below the average size for a secondary school. Students are mainly from the town of Hebburn. The number of students eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Almost all students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students of minority ethnic origin, and students who do not have English as their first language, is very low. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational need, and the percentage of students identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hebburn is a satisfactory school with many good features. The standards students attain in their examinations and the progress they make are satisfactory. It is good in mathematics and science at Key Stage 3, but needs to improve in English at the higher levels in national tests. It also needs to improve its results in science in GCSE examinations. The school is very well led by the headteacher, and the senior leadership team. They have a very clear picture of its strengths and weaker areas, and effective plans to make it better are having an impact. The senior staff give the headteacher good support. Managers at all levels in the school are also adding to this effort by leading effectively and focusing sharply on improvement. This too is having a positive impact. The governors know the school well, support it and also hold it to account. The school is helping students to develop effectively, encouraging them successfully to be healthy, and to take responsibility and link to the community; although its work in this area is reduced by overall inadequate attendance. Teaching and learning are good; lessons are well organised and students respond well. The vast majority of students behave well. Current work shows several examples of good progress by students, as there were in 2006 at both key stages. The school provides a good curriculum with a widening range of courses, including vocational programmes for older students; and a wide variety of activities which enrich students' experience. These courses and activities meet the needs of students well. The activities are appreciated and enjoyed, and there is a good level of participation in them. The care, guidance and support the school offers for students are good. The school is committed to the safety and enjoyment of students and puts this commitment into practice in its procedures. Apart from the urgent need to improve attendance, all other aspects of the school are at least satisfactory and in many important areas, including how well it is led, the teaching and learning and care and support, it is good. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, in particular at Key Stage 3 in English, by increasing the number of students attaining the highest levels in national tests, and at Key Stage 4 in science.
- Improve attendance.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The standards students attain and the progress they achieve are satisfactory. Although the attainment of students who joined the school most recently has risen and is just below the national average, up to 2006 attainment on entry was lower than this. In 2006 in GCSE examinations, standards were below the national average as measured by the number of students achieving five GCSEs grades A* to C, including English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the proportion achieving these grades, including English and mathematics, has risen over the last three years. In earlier years at Key Stage 4, the school added good value in 2005 in what students achieved compared to their attainment on joining the school, and added satisfactory value to students' achievements in 2004. In 2006 in GCSE examinations the strongest performance for students was in history, sports studies and food technology. Science performance was weaker

and did not add sufficiently to students' earlier achievement. Based on what students had achieved at the end of Key Stage 3 and then by the end of Key Stage 4, students made good progress in mathematics and satisfactory progress in English.

Students in Key Stage 3 in 2006 made good progress in mathematics and science. The standards students attained in both subjects were in line with national averages at both the expected levels of attainment for students of this age, and also in the percentage of students which attained the higher levels. In English they made satisfactory progress; the standards attained remained below the national average at the expected level of attainment. The proportion of students attaining the higher level outcomes in tests in English was much lower than the national average.

Overall, all groups of students make satisfactory progress; students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by the school and make good progress at both key stages.

The school has a thorough understanding of the weaknesses in this area and has intervened to bring about improvement in science, where students' current performance indicates a positive impact. It is now focusing sharply on improving the skills of students who join the school with weaknesses in reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school generally is good and the vast majority of students have positive attitudes to learning. Almost all parents' responses to the inspectors were positive about all aspects of the school. A few parents and some students say that, despite recent improvements which they recognise, occasionally learning is still adversely affected by the behaviour of some less well motivated students. The school is aware of this and has a revised behaviour policy and procedures to make the management of behaviour consistent.

Permanent exclusions are rarely needed and fixed term exclusions have declined because of the success of the school's efforts to ensure more effective and consistent use of its recently revised behaviour policy. In general, students feel safe in school and know how to work safely in lessons. Some bullying does exist but students are confident that, in the main, teachers effectively resolve incidents. Attendance is currently inadequate. With the support of the local authority and other outside agencies, the school has recently devised and implemented appropriate procedures to improve attendance, although they have yet to make a significant positive impact on the overall picture.

Students understand the importance of diet and regular strenuous physical activity in contributing to and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students respond well to the good opportunities provided for them to reflect on issues important to young adults through well devised assembly themes and tutorial programmes. Nearly all students take part in community projects and charitable activities which contribute well to their moral and social development. They respond well to opportunities to take responsibility, for example, as members of the school council, or working on behalf of others. Many take part in a broad range of educational visits and are prepared well for their future in a multicultural society. Students are satisfactorily acquiring the key skills they need, and they are prepared well for the world of work; increasing numbers go on into training and vocational courses on leaving school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. There is a consistent approach to lesson planning. All lessons begin with purposeful activities and end with a session where teachers check what students have learned. In a mathematics lesson, excellent questioning involved all students and helped the teacher to find out what students had learned and what progress they had made. However, in some lessons teachers need to encourage students to answer in detail to help them to extend their thinking. The best lessons have a brisk pace and students are engaged in a range of stimulating learning activities. Teachers clearly show students what they have to do. In an art lesson the teacher compared a model made by the teacher and a student's design to show students what was expected. Relationships in the classroom and behaviour of students are good. Good use is made of teaching assistants, especially in the teaching of literacy. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) provides good learning opportunities. In a food lesson, digital photography was used well as a tool to record and assess students' work. There is good use of whiteboards for teaching; their use now needs to be developed to involve students more interactively in their learning. Students are involved in the assessment of their own and others' work and most know at what level they are working. However, marking of students' work is inconsistent and not always helpful in telling students how to improve. Teachers refer regularly to what students are required to do to achieve and make progress in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well adapted to the needs of each student. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for. Lessons in basic literacy help them to achieve well. Although the development of the curriculum has not yet had a full impact on students' achievement, literacy, numeracy and ICT are developing effectively across the curriculum. Students enjoy lessons which help them to develop learning and thinking skills. These lessons are enabling students to revise better and to more effect. The decision to start Year 10 courses immediately after the Year 9 examinations in English and mathematics has ensured that students are motivated to work hard. A good range of academic and vocational courses related to and supported by local colleges and businesses is open to Years 10 and 11. Alongside the school's enterprise education programmes, this has raised aspirations and has allowed students to develop good work-place skills. Good programmes of personal, social and health education and citizenship are followed by all students and cover all essential health and safety priorities. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, technology and the performing arts. Additional examination courses and revision classes are provided after school, in the holidays and at weekends. These activities are taken up enthusiastically by students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for students are good with well organised systems to support them. Policies and practice relating to safeguarding are in place and fully meet current regulations. Consequently, students feel safe and enjoy the experience of school. Teachers

work hard to make learning enjoyable. Relationships among students and staff are trusting and strong. As a result, students know that there is always someone to turn to in times of trouble. A committed team of teachers works with the social inclusion manager and outside agencies to provide high quality care and support for vulnerable students. Initiatives, such as the off-site house, which has been developed by the school and decorated by students, offer respite, and a secure learning base for students who need it. Transition procedures prepare students well as they join the school and for the option choices they make later. Good careers guidance has raised aspirations for future education and employment. Such committed interest from their teachers helps to ensure good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning from most students. The quality of the process for setting academic targets and checking students' progress is good. Although some students need to raise their achievement, the process leads to prompt intervention which helps students and helps learning mentors to support students who are underachieving.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. There is good and effective leadership at all levels in the school, and the very effective leadership of the headteacher especially, all play a crucial part in ensuring students thrive and make sound progress. The headteacher, governors and leadership teams systematically analyse information about students' performance and diligently monitor and gauge the effectiveness of all aspects of school life to review their work. In turn, the school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate, although modest in judging some of its aspects. Governance is good. The governors' productive association with the school's leadership ensures that the school's development plan rightly focuses on raising standards. Their priorities for action and training activities are carefully aligned to improving the quality of teaching, through for example, making more effective use of assessment for learning techniques and interactive whiteboard technology to enhance learning. Governors ensure too that financial administration is securely undertaken, and that best value is gained from their resources. The school makes certain that its procedures for appointing staff meet current requirements to safeguard the welfare of students. The high commitment of the school's governors and leadership team to forging links between school and the local community is responsible in a large part for the improving esteem in which it is held, and the confidence of parents in the headteacher and his team.

The capacity for improvement is good. The leadership team's effectiveness can be seen in the good progress made in successfully addressing issues identified at the last inspection. In some subjects standards are rising and many students currently in school are making good progress towards their targets.

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Annex A

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	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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
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

23 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Hebburn Comprehensive School, Tyne and Wear, NE31 2QU

I and the other inspectors who visited the school want to thank you for the help you gave us during the inspection, especially talking to us about your life in school and your school work.

The inspection found that Hebburn is a satisfactory school, and several aspects of it are good.

You make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactory results in examinations and tests, and in some the progress has been good. We know that current work also shows good progress.

Based on what has happened in the past, we think improvement is needed in GCSE science and in English at the higher levels in Year 9 tests and the school is tackling these areas.

Another important area where the school needs to improve is in attendance, there is too much absence. The school, helped by other agencies, is trying to reduce this. Of course you can all play your part by attending school regularly.

The school has what is needed to continue to improve. It is very well led by the headteacher and he is well supported by the staff and the governors. We found you are well taught and that you behave well in lessons and around the school. This is helping everyone to feel safe and to enjoy school. You told us that most of the time this is how you felt.

You appreciated the activities the school provides and we know many of you participate in them. We also think the school is working well to provide opportunities for you to develop as young people and to follow worthwhile courses, to get you to take your health seriously and to be aware of right and wrong and to take responsibility. You respond to these opportunities well.

We enjoyed meeting you and wish you happiness and success in your time at Hebburn School.

Peter Harris

Her Majesty's Inspector