

# Heysham High School Sports College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119711
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301807
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marguerite McCloy HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1182
6th form	114
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M A Graham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Limes Avenue Morecambe Lancashire LA3 1HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 416830
<b>Fax number</b>	01524 832622

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Heysham High School Sports College is a larger than average secondary school with a sixth form, situated in an area of relative social and economic disadvantage. A higher than average proportion of students is eligible to claim free school meals. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average, with an above average proportion with a statement of special educational need. The majority of students are of White British heritage, although there is a growing number (currently around 4%) of Eastern European students for whom English is not their first language. An above average number of students join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

Heysham holds the new standard SportsMark award and has successfully retained its Specialist Sports College status and ArtsMark Gold award.

When the school was inspected in December 2005, it was judged to require special measures, due to unsatisfactory achievement, teaching, leadership, and sixth form. Subsequently, monitoring visits were carried out by HMI in the summer and autumn terms 2006, and spring 2007. This inspection is the result of the fourth monitoring visit.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Since its last inspection, Heysham High School Sports College has worked successfully in each of the areas identified as requiring improvement. It is now satisfactory overall with a number of strengths which indicate very good capacity for further improvement.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to maintain a determined focus on raising standards and improving teaching since its last inspection in December 2005. The headteacher and senior leaders articulate a clear vision which is communicated to and shared by all staff. The senior leadership team use their individual skills effectively to contribute to a very strong team spirit which has helped to motivate all staff to improve their performance.

Students enter the school with attainment which is generally below average, and a high proportion is identified as having difficulties with their learning. Although standards of attainment at the end of each key stage remain below average, students' achievement is now satisfactory and improving. Results in GCSE examinations in 2006 improved significantly on the previous year, and the school's evidence shows that its higher targets for 2007 are likely to be met.

Heysham High is an inclusive school which provides a high level of care, guidance and support for all of its students, the majority of whom make the most of the opportunities available to them. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance has improved significantly and the great majority of students now enjoy school because they find lessons more stimulating, the curriculum more relevant and an atmosphere which is more conducive to learning than at the time of the previous inspection. Students participate willingly in sports, performance and charity activities and are ready to accept responsibility, notably as Sports Leaders. A minority still find it difficult to live up to the school's higher expectations of their work, effort and self-discipline.

The quality of teaching is now good overall. The school has taken effective action to promote a culture in which staff are keen to share best practice and engage in regular professional development to enhance their skills and make lessons more enjoyable and challenging.

The school seeks the views of parents and students, for example, in consultation about the design of a new school uniform. A Parent Forum meets half-termly, along with representative staff members, to discuss current matters of importance or concern.

The school's sports specialism is a particular strength of its provision which is recognised by the whole school community as helping to improve outcomes for students. Purposeful links with other curriculum areas have been developed and the specialism is closely involved in the sharing of good practice in teaching, learning and behaviour management across the school.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. New leadership has brought a sense of direction and purpose and a determination that this sixth form will be the preferred choice of students in the area. The head of sixth form has put in place systems and structures to eliminate a legacy of underperformance and promote a culture of aspiration and achievement.

All aspects of provision are improving because they are closely monitored and evaluated for their impact on raising achievement and standards.

Although teaching was not observed during the inspection, it has been of consistently good quality during monitoring visits and students recognise the improvements that have been made. They report that most lessons are challenging and provide good opportunities for independent learning. The curriculum is increasingly well matched to students' needs and interests, with a good range of academic and vocational subjects offered at different levels. Care, guidance and support are good and students value in particular the accessibility of the student services manager, who is readily available to discuss all aspects of their academic and personal progress. All students are involved in the setting of their own target grades, which together with the results of regular assessment, form the basis of reviews of progress by subject leaders and tutors. Parents are becoming increasingly involved in this process. Underachievement is identified at an early stage so that help and support can be provided.

Attendance and punctuality have improved considerably as a result of the rigorous and consistently applied procedures for checking now in place. Students are made clearly aware of the consequences of lapses in behaviour or attendance, though most present themselves as articulate and confident, with positive attitudes to learning. Their involvement through Student Voice has been instrumental in the design of a new uniform and in improving facilities in the sixth form block. Nevertheless, some students still lack a sense of urgency and are too ready to use opportunities to re-sit examinations as a safety net for underperformance.

Though progress has been rapid and indicates a good capacity to improve, not all systems are yet sufficiently embedded to affect outcomes. Nevertheless, the evidence of its tracking and monitoring of progress give the school confidence that 2007 results will show a marked improvement in the numbers attaining A to E grades and, in particular, that the number at grade C will rise. The majority of students are on course to achieve or exceed their target grades.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Building on the improvements already made, raise standards and improve achievement across the main school and sixth form.
- Improve the personal development of the significant minority of students who find it difficult to demonstrate a sense of responsibility and self-discipline.

A small proportion of the 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**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory and improving because the school has made good progress since being placed in special measures in 2005 when achievement and standards were not good enough.

Students' overall attainment on entry to the school is below average, as measured by their Key Stage 2 national test results. Standards in the 2006 Year 9 tests in English, mathematics and science remained well below average, despite some improvement over the 2005 results. The school's evidence of progress made by the current Year 9 pupils indicates that its targets for

2007 will be met and possibly exceeded. This represents satisfactory and sometimes good progress for most students and reflects the upward trend in achievement and standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those whose first language is not English, make similar progress to their peers.

Standards at Key Stage 4 improved considerably in 2006 to halt the downward trend. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A\* to C grades at GCSE was nearer to the national average because students made good progress in Years 10 and 11.

A significant factor in this was the action taken by the school, including intervention programmes and an Easter 'Revision School' to remedy longstanding issues of underachievement. The good achievement of boys in vocational subjects contributed to this improving picture, and progress in English was stronger than in mathematics.

The proportion of students obtaining five or more higher GCSE grades which include English and mathematics remained well below average, although evidence shows that this number will rise in 2007, when overall GCSE achievement is likely to show further improvement on last year. In addition, 90% of Year 11 students have achieved a level 2 qualification in English and mathematics, more than doubling the school's figures for last year.

The school's specialist sports status has contributed positively to the good progress being made by students in each key stage in physical education (PE), including GCSE PE and BTEC Sport Studies, and a significant proportion of students achieve leadership awards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral and cultural development, are satisfactory. Social development is good. Attendance is now in line with the national average because it has improved significantly as a result of rigorous and consistently applied procedures, which check students' presence in each lesson. Punctuality has also improved but too many students are late at the start of the school day. Students feel involved in school life because their views are sought and taken into account, as in their preferred choices for school meals and the design of a new school uniform. Students' awareness of healthy lifestyles is evident through their involvement in physical activities and knowledge of healthy food choices. Students feel the school is safe and that good relationships are the norm. A large number of Polish students have settled in well. Behaviour has improved because most students understand and accept the standards expected and welcome the improved climate for learning, which encourages them to achieve as well as they can. Exclusions have fallen as a result. Nevertheless, there remains a small minority of students who can disrupt some lessons. Whilst the school's systems for managing negative behaviour are effective, more is required from some of the students themselves; they need a greater readiness to engage and present more positive and responsible attitudes.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Considerable effort has gone into agreeing quality assurance procedures and whole-school approaches to important areas such as engaging students in their learning, and in assessment and marking of work. As a result, teaching and learning have improved steadily and significantly since the previous inspection. While many lessons are good, as the school recognises, the overall quality can be improved further since there remains considerable variation within and between different subject areas and year groups. School managers know the strengths in teaching and learning, and encourage expertise to be shared in departmental and faculty meetings. Specific individual training or support is provided where required and very few lessons are now inadequate. However, progress in lessons is not always as good as might be expected given the quality of the teaching because many students are still developing independence, lack confidence in their basic skills or have poor retention of prior learning.

The best lessons comprise a variety of activities that motivate and interest students, giving them opportunities to work together as they talk about and extend their learning. There is an unrelenting focus on helping students to assess the quality of their own and others' work and to identify how it might be improved, for example, in Year 10 lessons on throwing the javelin and on interpreting a modern version of a poem by Chaucer. Simple but effective approaches ensure good pace and encourage thoughtful responses without unnecessary distractions; for example, a Year 9 science class planned a 'virtual' investigation of diffusion using paper and coloured counters rather than the actual apparatus. In many lessons, very good use is often made of electronic whiteboards so that students can enjoy memorable presentations, access a range of up-to-date source materials, and participate in interactive challenges. The best teachers constantly check the success of lessons through well-judged questioning of individual students or whole-class interventions, and adjust their plans where necessary to get the students' learning back on track.

Satisfactory lessons ensure students make reasonable progress but do not achieve the level of involvement that would inspire learning and swiftly raise standards. Teachers' questions often do not probe understanding sufficiently, so that advice to students about how to improve their work is imprecise or unclear. Ends of sessions are not always timed or structured sufficiently to allow for a methodical check of learning so that subsequent lessons can be focused on the students' most pressing needs. Planning is usually thorough and detailed, although actual lessons do not entirely match intentions on every occasion. Much marking of work is detailed and constructive, giving clear advice to students about how to meet targets and set new goals. Most students have a good understanding of their targets and of the criteria against which their work will be assessed. Relationships between staff and students are generally warm and productive; teaching assistants are frequently helpful in challenging students to sustain effort and achieve success.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is good, especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. The school recognises that the curriculum for younger students could be made more appealing and relevant to their needs. A start has been made in providing teaching for the least able students that focuses on developing their basic skills and increasing their self-esteem. A class of gifted and talented students has been identified in Years 7 and 8. All Year 7 students are trained in thinking, together with personal and independent learning skills. This anticipates broad changes in curriculum content and approach that might come about as a result of the planned Key Stage 3 review.

Older students, in both Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, are offered a rich choice of courses that allows them to pursue academic, vocational or mixed pathways. Good provision of level 2 basic skills courses enables students who do not achieve grade C passes at GCSE in English and mathematics to progress to post-16 studies. Successful collaboration with other providers helps to meet students' needs and the school has taken a lead in some developments. The specialist sports college provision ensures that all students enjoy a rich diet of sport and health-related activities within and beyond the taught curriculum. Sport and physical education teachers have established imaginative links with other subject areas so that students are helped to make connections in their learning and enjoy an increasingly coherent experience across the curriculum. Students speak enthusiastically of the range of extra-curricular activities that is available; participation rates are high.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Provision for care, guidance and support is good. There is a substantial level of commitment for the welfare of all students in the school. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are in place, and are currently under review. Systems for risk assessment for out of school visits are thorough. Required checks for ensuring the suitability of staff to work with children are carefully carried out. Students are well known to staff and say they feel safe and well cared for. They trust staff to take their concerns seriously, and value the steps taken by the school to deal with issues that concern them, such as bullying, should they occur.

The reorganisation of learning and behavioural support, and special educational needs provision within an inclusion faculty are having a positive impact. Strong partnerships with outside agencies help to provide sensitive care and support for vulnerable students. Good help is provided for able students and for those with additional learning difficulties, and this supports their progress effectively. A key feature of the school's commitment to students' well-being is the successful learning support unit, providing both respite and individually tailored learning programmes for targeted students who are having difficulty in coping with their secondary education. Positive links with primary schools smooth the transfer of students into Year 7. Initiatives such as the foundation group provide further effective support for students at this stage. Older students receive good support and information when making their subject choices at the end of Year 9, and when deciding on their subsequent career and post-16 opportunities.



Both academic and personal progress are closely tracked across the school. Effective systems are in place to set curriculum and other targets, and there are regular checks on students' progress towards these. Those likely to do less well than they should are identified, and academic and pastoral staff combine to bring them back on track successfully. Review procedures are popular and help students and their parents understand how well they are doing and what they can do to improve further.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management have improved significantly since the school was made subject to special measures and is now good.

The highly effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by senior and middle leaders, has brought about a determination to raise standards and improve achievement for all students. The headteacher's clearly articulated vision and ambition for the future of Heysham High is shared by the whole school community. It is characterised by improved staff morale and a sense of enthusiasm which now exists in the school. Staff are keen to continue to improve their performance, both as individuals and as members of a strong and effective team.

Senior leaders and governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They recognise and celebrate the significant progress which has been made in the last two years, whilst acknowledging that more remains to be done to reach their own ambitious targets. The school monitors its performance rigorously and involves middle leaders whose confidence and skills have grown. Some of the school's own judgements of its effectiveness are a little generous, affected understandably by the recognition of its rapid pace of improvement since being placed in special measures.

The school has appreciated and made good use of the support, monitoring and advice provided by local authority advisers and subject consultants, particularly during the time it has been in special measures. The local authority's regular reviews of the school's progress have contributed to the quality and accuracy of its self-evaluation and improvement planning.

The school is now providing satisfactory value for money. Based upon the success of the school's actions to bring about improvement since the last inspection, and the positive ethos and enthusiasm which exists across the school, there is very good capacity for further improvement.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	3
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
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	3	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	3	
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	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Heysham High School Sports College, Morecambe, LA3 1HS

I would like to thank you on behalf of myself and the inspection team for making us so welcome in your school during our recent visit. We have been impressed with the improvements your school has made since its last inspection. This letter aims to summarise what we found during our two days.

We found your school to be satisfactory overall with many good aspects and it no longer requires special measures. Your achievements in Years 7 to 11 and in the sixth form are improving and most of you are now making at least the progress expected of you. We agree with you that teaching has improved and is now usually good, and you are gradually developing the skills to help you learn more effectively in lessons. You have a wide and growing range of courses and extra curricular activities to help you achieve and develop as individuals. The good care and support you receive are making a difference in helping you achieve as well as you can. It was clear from our visit how much the gaining of Sports College status has meant to you. It has improved the quality of your experience at college through lessons and the choice of courses available.

The leadership and management of the school and sixth form are good. Your headteacher and senior managers are doing a very good job in making sure your school continues to strive to be even better. They know what is needed to make improvements and are working hard to make sure this happens across all subjects.

We suggested that the school needs to focus on the following two areas.

- To further improve your achievement in both the main school and the sixth form so that you all do as well as you possibly can in each of your subjects.
- To raise your expectations as students so you have an increased sense of responsibility and self-discipline. You can particularly help the school to achieve this aspect by being on time for every lesson and concentrating to make sure you learn as much as you can. Your parents will also be able to help by reminding you to be well prepared and punctual each morning!

Thank you again for your help in this inspection and we would like to wish you all the best in your studies.

Marguerite McCloy HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector