

Hurstmere Foundation School for Boys

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101480
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307705
Inspection date	4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Robert Ellis HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School	1036
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs V Hughes-Narborough
Headteacher	Mr A Stringer
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002
School address	Hurst Road Sidcup DA15 9AW
Telephone number	020 8300 5665
Fax number	020 8300 2039

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The school was visited for one day. Inspectors investigated the following issues in detail: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum, leadership and management and the sports specialism. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, curriculum and planning documents, monitoring records, observation of the school at work, discussions with governors, staff and boys and the parents' inspection questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Hurstmere Foundation School is a popular, non-selective school for boys in Bexley. Around one quarter of children in the borough are offered places in selective schools and the school has difficulty in recruiting boys from across the full range of attainment. Attainment on entry is generally below the national average. Boys come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds although the percentage of boys who are eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, at just over two per cent. More than one in four boys have been identified as having additional educational needs, which is higher than in most schools and the proportion of boys with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Most boys are of White British heritage and just over seven percent come from ethnic minority backgrounds. Few boys speak English as an additional language. Hurstmere became a Sports Specialist College in September 2003. The school has the Investors In People Award, Healthy Schools Award, Sports Mark and is currently working towards the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Mark and Basic Skills Mark. In recent years the school has experienced some difficulties in the recruitment and retention of suitably qualified and experienced teachers in some subjects.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The Hurstmere Foundation School cares for its boys well and is a good school that has some outstanding features. The boys have good attitudes to learning and behave well both in lessons and around the school. The school has an inclusive ethos and all boys are encouraged and enabled to do their best whatever their background or ability. Boys feel safe and well cared for and the friendly nature of the school is evident from the good relationships that the boys enjoy with their teachers and with each other. Most parents are strongly supportive of the school and typical comments from parents were; 'my son goes to school with a smile and comes home with a smile', 'It is a privilege that both my sons have had the chance to be educated at this school'.

Boys enter the school with attainment that is generally below average. Their achievement is at least satisfactory and increasingly good at Key Stage 3, and outstanding at Key Stage 4. The outstanding achievement of the older boys is a result of their positive attitudes, consistently good or better teaching and outstanding care, guidance and support. GCSE results in 2007 show 39% of boys achieved five or more A* to C grades including mathematics and English and 73% achieved five higher grades overall. Monitoring of boys' progress and achievement by senior leaders is outstanding and most boys are on target to reach or exceed the challenging targets they have been set. Assessment information is accurate and used well to ensure that there is effective intervention when underperformance is evident. The boys who have additional educational needs make similar, and often better, progress than other boys.

Boys' personal development is good. They say that they enjoy school and that rare incidents involving bullying or other inappropriate behaviour are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. There are outstanding opportunities for boys to take responsibility, for example, as student leaders and form captains. The boys make a good contribution to the local and wider community, particularly through their charitable work and sports leadership in primary schools. One recent charity project raised money to purchase alpacas to aid economic development in a South American village. Attendance is satisfactory and there are good procedures to support and challenge boys who do not attend regularly. The development of skills necessary for the work place or further study is good in some respects but is limited by attainment in numeracy and literacy that is only satisfactory. The boys demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong and their awareness of other cultures has improved since the previous inspection.

Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that the leadership team have an accurate picture of where the strengths and areas for improvement are. Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. However, a small proportion of teaching, although satisfactory, is not as effective as it should be and the school recognises that this needs improvement in order to drive up standards. Appropriate steps are taken to improve teaching, including a good programme of professional development opportunities to further strengthening aspects of teaching and learning.

The curriculum is good, is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements. The school is developing a curriculum that is flexible and responsive to boys' needs. Recent improvements have introduced a wider range of vocational pathways at Key Stage 4. Vocational courses such as GNVQ / National Certificate information and communications technology (ICT) and BTEC Sport have been included to raise achievement and provide a better match to learners' needs and capabilities. The impact of the school's sports specialism on the curriculum is substantial.

Two hours of core physical education (PE) in Key Stage 3 and four hours in Key Stage 4, including strong links to parts of the citizenship programme, and an extensive variety of good well attended extra curricular sports activities, enable and encourage boys to take regular exercise and be healthy. In addition, this has a beneficial effect on raising self-esteem and developing positive attitudes to learning.

The headteacher and his senior managers are providing outstanding leadership and management. They are not complacent and are determined that the school will provide a high quality of education, leading to achievement and success for all. Self-evaluation is used well to examine the impact of actions taken and to plan for further improvement. Middle leaders are being held more accountable for the boys' achievement and are becoming more involved in strategic planning and rigorous self-evaluation. This is making a positive contribution to raising standards and the school is committed to the further development of its middle leaders. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively and provide a good balance of high quality support and challenge. Financial management is excellent and there are clear links between spending and the school's priorities for improvement. Resources are deployed well to ensure good value for money. There has been a steady improvement in standards and the school has made good progress in addressing the issues identified in the last Ofsted inspection. Those responsible for leading and managing the school recognise where further improvement can be made and have good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on improvement to teaching so that more teaching is good or better.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

17 December 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Hurstmere Foundation School for Boys, Sidcup, DA15 9AW

Thank you for contributing to inspection and making us feel so welcome. A special thank you to those of you who spoke to us about your school, particularly the student leaders who gave up some of their time to talk my colleague and those of you who spoke to me about the work that you were doing.

After having considered all the evidence, we judged that your school is good with some outstanding features.

We liked to see how friendly you were and how well you look after the school and each other. You told us that you enjoy being at school and particularly enjoy sports activities. You said that you feel safe and well looked after and that you have a say in what happens in your school. We were pleased to see that you understand the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and have very positive attitudes to learning. We saw that most of you work hard and make the progress that you should. We also found that you think about others less fortunate than yourself and raise a lot of money for charity.

The people who have responsibility for making decisions about your school know it extremely well and have a very clear understanding of what it does best and what needs to improve.

The school has excellent systems to track the progress that you are making and is working hard to give you a good choice of subjects to study at a variety of levels.

Although teaching is good, we think that some teaching needs to be better so that more lessons are more interesting and exciting and enable you to do your best.

Thank you again for helping us with our work and making our visit to Hurstmere so enjoyable.

Robert Ellis

Her Majesty's Inspector