

# Hazel Grove High School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 106137            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Stockport         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 309041            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 7–8 November 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Susan Wareing HMI |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Secondary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 11–16  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 1225   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Mrs Val Cottom   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Ms Joanne Nolan  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 23 February 2004   |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Jacksons Lane<br>Hazel Grove<br>Stockport<br>Cheshire<br>SK7 5JX |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0161 4564888   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0161 4563961   |

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Hazel Grove High School is a larger-than-average comprehensive school in an area of higher-than-average social and economic advantage. However, a significant number of students come from less advantaged backgrounds. The majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but a higher-than-average proportion of these students has a statement of special educational need. The school houses a local authority designated resource base for 15 students with severe learning difficulties. The school has Specialist School and Academy Trust status in technology, science and mathematics.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Hazel Grove High School is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. It provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. After some past instability, there are clear signs that the commitment of the recently appointed headteacher, senior leaders and other staff are enabling the school to move forward. For instance, new systems for tracking students' progress have been put in place and, partly as a result, achievement has begun to improve. Students enjoy coming to the school and behave well. One student said that one of the best things about the school was the teachers: the relationships within the school are very respectful and supportive. This reflects Hazel Grove's inclusive approach towards all members of the school community. Students feel safe and appreciate the many opportunities to serve the community, for example, as junior sports leaders.

Students reach standards which are above national averages. They enter the school with standards that are broadly average and reach standards that are above average at the end of Key Stage 4, when measured by the proportion of students obtaining five A\* to C grades (including English and mathematics) at GCSE. Performance at grades A\* to C without English and mathematics is less consistent. Overall, this represents satisfactory achievement, with students making better progress at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. The school has taken vigorous action to tackle pockets of underperformance, for example, amongst middle-ability boys and a small proportion of students amongst those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The challenge facing the school is to drive this improvement across all departments.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. In good lessons teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and plan well-structured lessons with frequent opportunities for students to reflect on their learning. The satisfactory lessons lack such opportunities and do not provide specifically designed work to meet the learning needs of all students. Marking does not always give students precise enough information about how to improve their work.

The curriculum is good overall. A strong feature is the effective partnership with local institutions to broaden the range of courses offered in Years 10 and 11, including good alternative provision for disaffected students, which results in better behaviour and, for some students, improved achievement. A wide range of popular extra-curricular opportunities contribute to students' enjoyment of school. There is scope to extend provision for gifted and talented students in routine lessons.

Care, guidance and support are good. Support for students with specific learning needs is a strength and makes very effective use of outside agencies. Parents and carers are very grateful for the school's success in supporting vulnerable young people in the school community and improving their life chances. The school recognises the need to develop further the use of assessment information for academic guidance in all subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some good features. The headteacher and strengthened senior leadership team offer a clear sense of purpose to the school. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and there has been progress on all the key issues from the last inspection. Appropriate changes to structures and processes are beginning to hold staff to account more effectively and help the school to meet more challenging targets. However, the impact of these measures is not yet fully evident across the school. Although there are good opportunities for teachers to share good practice, the most effective approaches are not yet spread consistently

across the school. Therefore, school's capacity for further improvement, while increasing, is satisfactory.

The school's specialist status has helped to improve standards in technology, mathematics and science and provide better resources for information and communication technology (ICT) across the school. The school is now working hard to extend its community role.

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

- Ensure that the new systems for tackling underachievement are used consistently in all subjects.
- Ensure that the most effective teaching approaches are shared across the school.
- Ensure that students are better informed about how exactly to improve their work.

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**

Standards are good overall, with students entering the school with broadly average standards of attainment. By the end of Year 9, they reach standards in English, mathematics and science that are above the national average. Unvalidated data indicate that the school is set to improve its performance significantly and exceed its challenging targets in the 2007 Key Stage 3 national tests.

In Years 10 and 11 standards are less consistent than in Years 7 to 9. In general, performance at Key Stage 4 is better in English, mathematics and science than in other subjects. Standards are above the national average, as measured by the proportion of students obtaining five A\* to C grades (including English and mathematics) at GCSE. Unvalidated data for 2007 indicates the proportion of students obtaining five A\* to C grades (without English and mathematics) at GCSE is at the national average.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is generally stronger at Key Stage 3 than Key Stage 4, with the 2006 results showing that progress made by students from Years 7 to 9 was good overall. Vigorous action has been taken by the school to tackle pockets of underperformance, for example, amongst middle-ability boys. New curriculum arrangements have been put in place and there are improved systems for tracking students' progress, resulting in more students being set to meet their target grades this year.

The school has a very successful inclusion policy. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is above average; they are fully integrated within the school and now make similar progress to their peers at both key stages.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This was evident in lessons, displays and from views expressed by students. For example, they have a well-developed understanding of other cultures and those in their school community who have disabilities. They appreciate this diversity and report that this helps them confront prejudice. One student in Year 10 said, 'We feel like one big community, irrespective of our differences.'

Students' attitudes and behaviour seen during the inspection, around the school site and in lessons, are good, although a small minority of parents expressed concern about behaviour. Students show respect for each other and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers. Students feel safe in school. They report that bullying is rare and that when it does occur the school deals with it effectively. Attendance is satisfactory and the school's hard work has resulted in an improvement this year.

The high uptake of recreational sport, as well as team sports, is a reflection of students' commitment to leading healthy lifestyles, although their commitment to healthy eating is less strong.

An effective school council seeks the views of students and contributes to developments in the school, although the students would like to have a greater influence on the decisions made. The school enjoys strong links with the local community. An impressive community newspaper distributed to 25,000 households, in addition to a wide range of fund-raising activities and evening classes, all ensure that the local community is aware of what the school does and benefits from the facilities Hazel Grove offers.

Students make good progress in developing the personal qualities that will help them to lead fruitful working lives. Examples include participation in the Young Enterprise Scheme and the Junior Sports Leader Award. The large uptake of the many opportunities available to help out at school events contributes to students' self-esteem.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Several examples of good teaching were seen, where students responded well to the focused individual support that they received. Teachers have strong class management skills and these contribute to the positive relationships in lessons. One parent commented that teachers create a, 'very open and friendly learning environment', and inspectors agree. Teachers know their subjects well. However, in too many lessons, their planning does not take sufficient account of the needs of the whole range of students. As a result, some students are not challenged to achieve as well as they can. Because most lessons have clear objectives and are well structured and organised, students take part actively and respond well to the set tasks.

In good lessons, teachers use ICT effectively to help their explanations; for example, in one food technology lesson, the teacher used a computer-based presentation to demonstrate ways of evaluating the students' own and others' work. This added pace and visual impact to the lesson. Some teachers make very effective use of activities at the end of the lesson to assess students' progress, but in the satisfactory lessons there are too few opportunities for students to reflect upon what they have learnt, or how well they have learnt. The quality of marking is too variable, with a number of teachers offering advice that is insufficiently focused on how to improve. The school has correctly identified that the proportion of good teaching needs to increase and has started to focus clearly on how the good practice that exists can be shared more widely.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is well matched to students' needs and meets all statutory requirements. The school regularly reviews its provision and evaluates new courses effectively. In Key Stage 4, students benefit from a wide and appropriate range of option choices. Collaborative arrangements with two other schools have helped to broaden the choice for those students who wish to follow a vocational route. The school has been innovative in introducing an effective alternative curriculum for a small group of students at risk of not achieving. This provision has helped these students to continue their studies and achieve in line with their abilities.

The school has recognised the need to deploy support staff more effectively in some lessons and has taken steps to improve this aspect of its work. In mathematics, the provision for the more able students in Key Stage 4 is enriched by a free-standing mathematics qualification, which helps these students to bridge the gap between GCSE and A-level studies. There is scope to extend provision for gifted and talented students, elsewhere in the curriculum. Students preparing to leave school receive a satisfactory level of support, which helps to maintain the high proportion of students who choose to continue their studies. The good range of extra-curricular activities that is on offer contributes to students' enjoyment of school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Staff provide good care to ensure students' well-being and safety. Legal requirements for safeguarding students are met and checking procedures are robust.

Students most at risk are supported well. Those likely to become disengaged are identified promptly. The school's work with these students has improved their behaviour and involvement in school and, in some cases, helped them to achieve in line with their abilities. External agencies and parents have a key role in this. The impact of this concerted work is seen in the considerable reduction of exclusions this year.

The school takes effective steps to identify students who are not achieving as well as they might. Individual needs are assessed carefully. The effects of different strategies are monitored closely and revised in the light of outcomes for students. The school ensures that its small proportion of Black and minority ethnic students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated into the school. For example, the school recognises which students are at different stages of learning English as an additional language and adjusts support accordingly to meet their needs. Students from the resourced unit for those with severe learning difficulties participate fully in lessons alongside their peers, a clear indicator of the inclusiveness of Hazel Grove.

Students receive suitable information about future options. Following a motivational session last year, more Year 11 students expressed a wish to go on to higher education. Although most students know their targets, this position is not consistent across all subjects, with the result that students are not always clear about the steps needed to reach the next level or grade.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some good features, not least the drive and determination of the recently appointed headteacher and other senior appointments. They have strengthened the senior leadership team, which brings to the school a very clear, shared direction, based on raising achievement. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, these aspects are improving further as a result of the school's emphasis on their development. However, senior leaders have not yet prioritised sharply enough, at whole-school level, training in the key aspects of good and outstanding teaching that will raise achievement more rapidly. The leadership of the school displays a very firm commitment to its highly inclusive ethos and works hard with a range of outside agencies to support and safeguard students.

Target-setting is beginning to be used effectively in some departments to identify and intervene on underachievement. These measures are not yet consistently in place across the school. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and has begun to involve a wider range of stakeholders.

Parents are generally supportive of the school, but a small minority would appreciate better communication from the school so that their views can be taken into consideration more extensively. Senior leaders have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses; they recently introduced systems for whole-school development planning to identify appropriate priorities for the school. Due to the recent clarification of roles and responsibilities, leaders and managers at all levels are beginning to be held to account more effectively. However, there is still some inconsistency in the sharpness of forward planning in some departments. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and supportive of it. They are able to offer a challenge when necessary.



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## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### 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   |
| 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   | 3   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 2 |
| 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                              | 3 |

### 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                                    | 2 |
| 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?          | 3 |
| 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 |

<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>                                       | 3   |
| 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| 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  | 3   |
| 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**

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school.

The other inspectors and I found it very helpful and enjoyable to talk to you in lessons, meetings and around the school at breaks and lunchtimes. This is a summary of what we found.

Hazel Grove is an improving school that provides you with a satisfactory education. It has a number of good features. One of these is the opportunities the school gives for your personal development and welfare, and we saw you respond to this well. For example, we were impressed by how confident you were in talking with us and by your good behaviour in lessons and around the school.

You are well cared for and supported and there are a range of people at the school who will help you to deal quickly with any problems. That is why most of you enjoy school and feel so safe.

The curriculum is good. The school has made a number of changes to improve it. For example, there are good partnerships with other schools and colleges to broaden the range of courses that you can follow, such as vocational options. It was good to hear how many of you are involved in the wide variety of lunchtime and out-of-school activities that the school offers, such as sports and musical productions.

Most of you reach good standards in tests and examinations and generally make satisfactory progress. It was pleasing to learn about the help that the school is giving you to meet your targets. We think that some of you could do even better if all your teachers made sure that you know exactly how to improve your work. Most teaching is satisfactory and we also saw some good lessons where activities were well matched to the needs of everyone in the class. Good lessons also give you chances to discuss your learning and you value these very much. Your teachers are trying out new ideas and approaches to increase the amount of good teaching.

The school is led effectively. We think that your new headteacher and other senior staff have made a number of changes which are beginning to help the school to improve.

We have asked the school to:

- make sure that it uses information about your progress to help all of you to achieve even more in every subject
- increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching in all your subjects
- make sure that you know exactly how to improve your work in all your subjects.

I wish you all the best for the future.