

Honley High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107763
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309500
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Heather Barnett 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	1243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Hanson
Headteacher	Mr A Connor
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Station Road Honley Holmfirth West Yorkshire HD9 6QJ
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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 four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Honley is a larger than average high school for students aged 11-16. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average, as is the percentage of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the latter varies between year groups from 22% to 33%. The school is the lead school in the local authority for students within the autistic spectrum. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. The school has achieved a number of awards and was designated a specialist science college in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Honley is a good school. Students make good progress to achieve above average standards by the end of Key Stage 4. Progress is particularly good in Key Stage 3 and the science results achieved there are well above average. The personal development of students is good. Students say they feel safe, know how to keep healthy and enjoy taking part in sporting and other extra-curricular activities. Many students contribute to the life of the school and the local community; for example, as members of the school council or through musical events. Attendance is good and students develop high levels of skills to support them in their future careers. The behaviour of most students is good, but the poor behaviour of a minority hinders progress in a small minority of lessons. The behaviour policy is not yet applied consistently but the school is addressing this issue.

Teaching and learning are good. In most lessons students are well motivated and make good progress, with teachers using questioning effectively to challenge and check understanding. There are good examples of assessment, but in a minority of cases not enough advice is given on how students can improve their work. The curriculum is good. It is being developed to meet the changing needs of the students and the school's specialism has had a positive impact here. The extra-curricular activities are excellent. Care, guidance and support are good. There are strong pastoral systems which support students' personal development. Effective links with feeder schools ensure smooth transition into the school and there are also good partnerships with outside agencies. The 'Provision Base' provides very well for students within the autistic spectrum.

Leadership and management are good. Improvement strategies can be seen to be having a positive impact and the role of middle managers has been developed well. There is a better use of data and targets. However, quality assurance procedures need to be developed further to make sure all initiatives are consistently monitored and evaluated. The specialist status of the school has been used to good effect in many areas, such as broadening the curriculum, supporting development in teaching and learning, and strengthening links with feeder primary schools. Progress has been made in all the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection, particularly in developing ICT resources and their use. The school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the behaviour policy is implemented consistently in order to address the poor behaviour of a minority of students.
- Ensure the policy for Assessment for Learning is effectively applied so students receive the guidance they need to improve their work in all areas.
- Further develop quality assurance procedures to ensure consistency in monitoring and evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students achieve well from a broadly average starting point to reach above average standards by the end of Year 11. Achievement is particularly good in Key Stage 3 and by the end of Year 9 students reach above average standards. Students make good progress in both English and

mathematics. The school's science college status has helped to accelerate achievement in science to outstanding and has resulted in standards that are well above average in this subject.

Achievement in Key Stage 4 is not quite as impressive as in Key Stage 3 due to minor variations in the achievement of some groups of students; however, it is still good overall. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at grade C and above is consistently above average, including when English and mathematics are taken into account. The school recognised that some groups of students were underachieving, including a small number of disaffected students and some less able boys. Alterations to the curriculum have ensured that the needs of these students are now met more effectively. They are able to make better progress in basic skills and have that progress recognised.

Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Those within the autistic spectrum make especially good progress in their personal development. This is greatly valued by parents who typically say that their children have come on in 'leaps and bounds'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and best in relation to moral and social development. They are encouraged to value, understand and be accepting of 'difference' in their peers and in the world around them. Students largely show consideration for each other, are welcoming to visitors and generally have good attitudes to their work.

Students say they feel safe and that they can go to an adult in confidence for help and advice. They have confidence that they can get adequate support if troubled by bullying and that they will be listened to fully. The behaviour of students is better in classrooms than when they move around school or have less adult supervision, for example at lunch times. In classes their behaviour is usually good but occasionally lapses where teaching is less effective.

Students know how to keep healthy and this is reflected in high participation rates in sports and other physical activities. They enjoy most lessons and talk very positively about the extra-curricular activities, particularly drama and music. Attendance is good and recently implemented procedures for contacting parents by text, voicemail or email are having a positive impact on students' attendance to ensure that this remains so.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The majority of the lessons seen during the inspection were judged to be good or better. Most teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and make good use of interactive whiteboards as a resource for learning. The brisk pace of lessons, challenging questioning to develop thinking and check understanding, and the use of praise by teachers motivate students and enable good progress to be made. Planning is good overall and the clear learning objectives are shared with the students.

Students usually show good attitudes to their work and are motivated when they are fully engaged in active learning. However, in some lessons expectations are not as high and the pace of learning slows. In these lessons there is often too much teacher input, students lack motivation

and their attention wanders. This occasionally leads to low level disruption that impacts on learning.

The assessment and tracking of students' progress is used effectively to enable intervention for those students identified as most in need of help. Good marking and assessment usually tells shows students exactly how well they are doing and provides useful guidance about improvement through teachers' written comments. However, in a minority of cases, marking does not always give students enough advice about how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is interesting and well balanced, enabling students to make good progress. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum has been thoughtfully revised to meet the emerging needs of students and the local community. As a result of these revisions, students are now becoming more engaged with the curriculum which is reflected in their improved attendance. However a minority of students in Year 11 would have benefited from alternative courses to GCSE.

The improved curriculum, particularly for less able students, has enabled them to gain better skills in mathematics and English. School leaders are keen to keep abreast of current educational developments and this is reflected in a growing partnership with other schools and colleges in the area. Gifted and talented students are given good opportunities to excel, for example through achieving top grades in GCSE music in Year 9, and through helping primary children in languages.

The school's science specialism has added much to the curriculum, for example through the 'Leonardo da Vinci' day where the theme was imaginatively explored throughout the curriculum. The varied and interesting menu of enrichment opportunities is outstanding. Junior sports leaders develop their personal skills by coaching pupils in primary schools. Music activities which are held at lunchtime are particularly valued by students and visiting artists make a positive contribution to expressive arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Good pastoral care and support are provided throughout the school by strong pastoral systems and this has a good impact on pupils' personal development and a satisfactory impact on academic achievement.

Academic guidance, although improved since the last inspection, is still not consistently applied throughout the school.

Students' behaviour in the school is variable because all staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy. The required procedures for health and safety and for child protection are in place and meet statutory requirements. Strong and effective partnerships with outside agencies also contribute well to the good provision for all students and this is especially so for those who are more vulnerable.

There are extensive and embedded links with associated primary schools which enable students to make a smooth transition to secondary school. Effective links with parents are maintained through questionnaires, newsletters, written reports and parents' evenings. Students are provided with good support when making decisions about option choices and pathways in Key Stage 4 and for their progression after 16.

The 'Provision Base' provides very well for students within the autistic spectrum because of effective and rigorous assessments, promotion of independence and the generalization of skills. Those in more mainstream provision who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well. This is because of early identification,

good use of extra adults in the classrooms and the recording of the progress of individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team has a clear view of the school and has put in place effective improvement strategies. These can be seen in a number of areas such as the significant improvement in progress for students in Key Stage 3 and the improvement in ICT resources and their use across the school.

The role of middle managers has been developed with the introduction of curriculum area leader posts. Middle managers now play a key role in moving the school forward and take an active part in self-assessment and improvement planning. Self-evaluation is thorough and managers know the school well. There is an improving use of data and targets to highlight underperformance at all levels, so effective strategies to address issues can be put in place. However, quality assurance procedures need to be further developed to ensure consistency in the monitoring and evaluation of all initiatives.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and provides a good level of challenge to the leadership team. The governors are very committed to the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement. The school provides good value for money. Links with the local community and other partners are good, especially with the feeder primary schools. The benefits of specialist status can be seen in the improved resources within the school and the good curriculum links which have been developed with feeder schools to support transition.

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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	2
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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
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 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	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

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents; they were most helpful.

We think that your school is providing you with a good education. You are making good progress, particularly in Key Stage 3, and achieve good results in your examinations. Your personal development is good, you enjoy coming to school, feel safe and have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle. Most of you behave well but some of you need to improve your behaviour both in the playground and in lessons. Teaching and learning are good, the curriculum is good and you really appreciate all the excellent extra-curricular activities on offer. The school looks after you well and provides you with the skills you need to do well when you leave. The leaders and managers of the school have a clear idea of what the school needs to do to improve further and are working hard on these areas. The main areas are:

- making sure the feedback on all your work shows you how you can improve it
- improving the behaviour of the minority of students who behave poorly
- making sure all the initiatives the leaders and managers put in place are thoroughly monitored.

You have a part to play here by behaving well at all times and working hard. Your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and with your support can continue to make progress in the future.