

Otley Prince Henry's Grammar School Specialist Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108093
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309596
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1402
6th form	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Bearpark
Headteacher	Mr John Steel
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
School address	Farnley Lane Otley West Yorkshire LS21 2BB
Telephone number	01943 463524
Fax number	01943 850978

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated how far the school's languages specialism contributes to raising achievement and students' awareness of global citizenship; how inclusive the school is; and how well the school's leaders and managers identify and respond to underperformance. Inspectors gathered evidence from meeting staff with relevant responsibilities, students and a governor; from observing lessons and extra activities; and by reading pupils' work, parents' questionnaires and other documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Prince Henry's Grammar School is a fully comprehensive secondary school. It was founded in 1607 and its students mainly come from the town of Otley, but with a significant minority from other districts of Leeds and surrounding rural areas. It has increased in size in recent years and is larger than average. As an established specialist language college it attracts a number of students from outside the immediate area, and most students in Year 7 have prior experience of learning a language as part of the school's Primary Languages Programme. Most students in the sixth form are drawn from the main school with some specialist courses attracting external students. The area served by the school is relatively advantaged in most parts. Most students are White British with small minorities from Indian and other Asian, Caribbean, African, Chinese, or mixed cultural heritages. No student is at an early stage of learning English. There is a below average percentage of students with learning difficulties or disabilities and an average percentage of students with a statement of special education needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Prince Henry's Grammar School is a good school with outstanding features. Students join the school with slightly above average standards overall and make good progress as a result of challenging and skilful teaching. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Key Stage 3. Significantly more students go on to gain five or more top grades in GCSE, including English and mathematics, than is found nationally. Even so, standards are only slightly above average in mathematics and in this subject, achievement is no better than adequate, particularly in Key Stage 4. Students' generally good academic progress goes hand in hand with good personal development and well-being: they enjoy learning, show concern for others and take pride in their school. Their attendance is good and their behaviour is excellent, as a result of high expectations and exemplary care and support. The curriculum is good, with some alternatives to the traditional array of academic courses and many interesting enrichment opportunities. Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied by the school, though a minority feels that the school could communicate and consult better on some organisational matters. The school is well led so that it continues to improve and gives good value for money.

Inspectors' investigation of the selected areas confirms the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation. The impact of the specialism in languages has had a very positive effect on standards and achievement. Interest in learning languages is now thriving. With very few exceptions, all students take a full GCSE course in a modern foreign language and more than half of students in Year 11 take a short course in addition to this. There are currently 26 double GCSE linguists in Year 11. Standards are above average and students' success in language examinations makes a significant contribution to the good overall achievement of students in the school. Despite a dip in GCSE French last year, standards in French, German and Spanish are consistently above average at least in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. All students in Year 8 have taster courses in Mandarin Chinese and all students in the sixth form follow a 12-week course in Italian.

The specialism has had a good influence on achievement across the school, by raising aspirations and spreading effective methods of teaching and assessment. For example, training led by the modern languages department has influenced the use of electronic whiteboards, well exemplified in the history and geography lessons seen. Members of the modern languages team take an active role in the teaching and learning group and are among those who provide 'buddy coaching' for other staff. Such work has influenced the use of assessment to inform lesson planning and guidance to students, seen for example in art, and the use of practical approaches to learning, as seen in mathematics. Inspection evidence supports the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good overall.

Through sharing its language teaching expertise, the school also makes an outstanding contribution to local schools and community language learning. The school takes a lead in training primary school staff as a part of the National Languages Strategy and advises on curricular transition in modern languages from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The school provides strong support for local secondary schools, hosts the head of modern languages forum for the local authority, and runs conferences for A-level students in Spanish. The Chinese Supplementary School, founded, organised and administered through language status, has grown from 35 to 118 students in seven years. Members of the modern languages department deliver training on aspects of the English education system, including teaching and learning styles and rewards systems. 'Languages for Leisure' modules are attended regularly by nearly 500 mainly adult

learners: 11 languages are represented and there is tuition at a variety of levels. Appropriately, in this extended school, the programme also comprises courses in healthy living, hobbies and interests, and creative arts.

The specialism has also contributed to the students' personal development, in particular their strong awareness of their global citizenship. Documentation and comments from both staff and students demonstrate that the school does much to foster community cohesion at local, national and international levels. Every year, two days are devoted to international and global citizenship where all subject departments deliver a wide range of projects on a range of relevant issues. Last year the school hosted over 200 visits from both adults and students from all over the world. Very productive links with several schools around the world, supported by imaginative curricular events, visits, and the use of video-conferencing, have led students to have an impressive level of cultural understanding. Students talk positively about what they have learned from visiting foreign countries and from the many overseas students who visit the school to talk about their cultures and experiences. Students' commitment to taking responsibility for their world demonstrated through their membership of the Eco Group, the Drugs Squad or by simply making sure their classroom's waste paper is recycled, was striking. Students are confident that they influence the school through consultations and the school council, and that they can turn to adults for personal guidance. Though the requirement for daily collective worship is only partly met, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, students responded impressively to an assembly which dramatically highlighted their responsibility for equality.

This is a strongly inclusive comprehensive school, where more vulnerable groups of students consistently make better than expected progress as a result of excellent care, support and guidance. A significant proportion of those who make really good progress in the school are individuals for whom the school has provided special support. The school offers vulnerable students and their parents or carers a single point of contact. Strategies for individual support are clearly communicated to staff and progress is well monitored. Students themselves speak highly of the sensitive and practical support they receive. High numbers of students, including more vulnerable ones, participate in a wide range of enrichment activities during and after the school day, such as the lively lunchtime library sessions. Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Students feel safe because, as those spoken to agreed, everyone looks after each other. Any bullying is handled well, and the impact of policies for child protection and equality is carefully monitored.

The school's leaders, including the governing body, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. Every aspect of the school's work is thoroughly monitored and evaluated, providing clear evidence that policies and strategies are turned into action and challenging targets are, in the main, met. Leaders and managers are very alert to any signs of underperformance by individuals or groups, or in any aspect of teaching, and take constructive action. The school has made some progress in broadening its curriculum to meet the needs and interests of all groups of students in the school. Subject leaders conduct their own reviews, and the history department provides an outstanding example of rigour and effectiveness in doing so. Monitoring and evaluation of the work of tutors and year heads is equally sharp and focused. When groups of students fail to make the expected good progress in any area, decisive action is taken, and the track record of improvement is good, as illustrated by English. Having identified that achievement is no better than satisfactory in mathematics, leaders and managers have taken immediate action to accelerate the progress of underperforming groups. While achievement

has yet to improve sufficiently in the subject, a clear overall direction has been set and middle leaders are being appropriately supported to meet suitably specific targets.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Standards are above average overall and, with the exception of 2007, standards have risen each year since the previous inspection. Lessons seen during the inspection showed that students in history, art and geography are well on course to reach challenging targets. Achievement is good and increasing numbers of students are performing well in vocational courses.

Personal development and well-being are good. A major strength is the willingness of sixth formers to take responsibility for supporting the younger students. Many students in both Years 12 and 13 are regularly involved in the reading club, act as mentors for new students to the school and for those in Year 10 who are experiencing some difficulty with the demands of GCSE. A telling example is the fair organised by sixth formers to highlight issues in relation to global warming. Students in Year 7 in particular enjoyed the activities and games organised for them.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Appropriate levels of challenge are typical in lessons. Students rise to the high expectations their teachers have of them and respond positively to quite sophisticated questioning techniques designed to make them think more deeply about the subject matter. For example, during an outstanding Year 12 history session, students made perceptive comments about why Italians were motivated to join Mussolini's Blackshirts in the inter-war years.

The curriculum is good and students have opportunities (partly through consortium arrangements) to opt for courses of study from over 30 academic subjects. The range of vocational courses is increasing and, through the NVQ course in sporting excellence, the school has established strong links with Leeds Carnegie Rugby Union Club and the RFU. There is a wide range of enrichment activities, complemented by the impact of language college status. There are increasing numbers of less academic students now entering the sixth form and the leadership is taking steps to adapt the curriculum to meet their needs more fully.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. In addition to strong academic guidance, demonstrated by students in Year 13 who are fully aware of how to reach the highest A-level grades, the relatively large numbers of students considered vulnerable are supported very well indeed on a one-to-one basis. As a result, some students who entered the sixth form with low self-esteem and modest academic qualifications achieve very well and now take a full part in everything the school has to offer them.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders are reflective professionals who are realistic about current performance and have an accurate view of where improvements need to be made.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 4.

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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	16-19
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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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	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	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	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	1	1
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	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

Inspection of Prince Henry's Grammar School, Otley, LS21 2BB

Thank you for the warm welcome to your school during the recent inspection. The discussions Mr Kidd and I had with a range of students were genuinely interesting and we enjoyed seeing your work. Many of your parents wrote with their views about the school and I am also grateful to them. I am writing to let you know of our findings.

Prince Henry's Grammar School is a good school with some outstanding features. You make good progress in most subjects and reach above average standards, although your progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 4, is only adequate. You also develop well as individuals who make a particularly strong contribution to the community. In your case, with your wide knowledge of languages and links with other countries, the community definitely includes the whole world, and your sense of your global citizenship is something special. Specialist Language College status has helped the school provide you with challenging and skilful teaching and a good curriculum, with a rich range of special events and extra activities. Those of you we spoke to made clear that you are proud of your school, enjoy learning and feel safe because everybody looks after each other. You attend school regularly and your behaviour is impressive. The school offers you excellent care, support and guidance, which has helped many of you to achieve better than expected results.

The school is well led, and one sign of this is that its leaders look for ways to improve and take effective action. A matter of priority is to improve your progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 4, and this will call for a determined effort from you as well as the staff.

I would like to wish you all well for the future.