

Henbury School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109279
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309950
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Nick Green HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	816
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Richard Davis
Headteacher	Clare Bradford
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Station Road Henbury Bristol BS10 7QH
Telephone number	0117 9030100
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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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little smaller than the average secondary school. The great majority of students are of White British heritage, most of who come from predominantly deprived socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is double the national average. Students' attainment on entry to the school has been well below average for many years but has risen a little recently. The school has a hearing-impaired resource base offering six student places and a group of students with moderate learning difficulties who are dual registered with a local special school; both groups are fully integrated into the school. The school is in its second year as a specialist arts college.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, as is students' achievement. However, in most respects, Henbury is a good school and has outstanding features. The school has taken effective steps to improve significantly since the last inspection and standards have risen considerably from a very low base. They were below average in Year 9 last year and exceptionally low in Year 11. Even so, given the starting points of students when they joined the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, their progress was satisfactory. No group of students underperformed. In art and design, students' standards were well above average and their achievement was outstanding. Students' current standards and progress across subjects are on track to rise further. The school's steady improvement and good capacity to improve further owe a lot to the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, the highly effective senior leadership team and the strong middle managers whose clear vision and direction set high expectations for staff and students.

Underpinning the improving performance of the school is the good care, guidance and support provided for students. An outstanding feature of this is the way the school works in partnership with others to promote students' well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which are good. Pastoral support is closely matched to individual needs, particularly for the most vulnerable students. Students have very positive relationships with their peers and adults, both in and outside of the school. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Students show an understanding of the diversity of British communities, and the contribution they make to the local community, through a wide range of activities, is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Much teaching and assessment is effective, but it is not yet consistently good across the school. Most lessons are planned carefully and taught using a range of stimulating methods. However, sometimes the pace of learning is too slow, work is not sufficiently challenging or matched to students' needs and the quality of marking and feedback to students is not good enough. The well chosen professional development activities used to improve the quality of teaching are proving effective and their impact is clearly contributing to the better progress currently being made by students.

Students benefit from the well devised curriculum that is constantly under review to ensure it meets all their needs. In the lower school, curriculum innovations are developing students' learning skills well. In the upper school, students are given a wide choice of options including good vocational pathways. A high proportion of students undertake and achieve well in arts subjects. The variety of extra-curricular activities and level of student participation in them are excellent. The effective promotion of community cohesion, diversity and equality exemplifies the inclusive nature of the school. Thorough and accurate self-evaluation clearly identifies the school's strengths and priorities for development. Challenging whole-school and arts-specific targets have been used well to raise standards.

The number of parents who returned questionnaires to inspectors was nearly three times greater than the average response and their support for the school is overwhelmingly positive. They say staff are very dedicated and that students' behaviour has improved. Parents speak of pride in the school, and say that problems are quickly resolved because staff are approachable and they have the students' best interests at heart. They say their children are happy and developing well. This high level of satisfaction is summed up by one parent's comment that 'We have been

delighted with the individual attention our children have received and the progress they have made.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise students' achievement and standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Ensure teaching and learning are challenging and well paced for all students, and work set is matched closely to their different needs.
- Ensure that the frequency and quality of the marking of students' work and guidance to students are consistently good so all students know what they need to do to improve.

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 have been exceptionally low at the end of Year 9 for some years though they have been rising steadily. Last academic year they were below average as more students attained the higher levels in the national tests. Given the starting points of Year 9 students when they joined the school, their progress and achievement were satisfactory. Students made better progress in English than in science and mathematics. Standards at the end of Year 11 have followed a similar trend and they too have risen significantly, although last academic year GCSE results were still exceptionally low, particularly in English and mathematics. In art and design, they were well above average. In relation to Year 11 students' attainment when they entered the school, their progress and achievement were satisfactory and outstanding in art and design. In both Year 9 and 11, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made similar progress to that of other students and no group of students underperformed in respect to their attainment on entry.

Year 9 and Year 11 students' current standards and levels of progress indicate they are on track to achieve better results by the end of this academic year. These rising standards are due to improvements in teaching and students' engagement in learning, and improvements in the support and academic guidance they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students enjoy school and this is clearly reflected in their positive attitudes to learning, their good behaviour and excellent relationships with staff. It is also shown by their satisfactory attendance that has recently significantly improved in all year groups; more particularly, the number who are persistently absent has reduced. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as exhibited by their thoughtful responses to wider events in discussions in school and their considerate attitudes towards each other and adults. As one parent wrote to inspectors, 'My daughter has blossomed and grown emotionally since she has been at Henbury. Her enthusiasm, confidence and enjoyment are at the highest I have ever seen. She loves coming to school.'

Students say they feel safe in school and know whom to turn to if they need comfort or help. They adopt safe practices in practical lessons and around the school. There is little racial intolerance and bullying is rare. Membership of the school council and the role of student

representatives, who act as ambassadors for the school as well as supporting younger students, enable students to develop responsibility and leadership. Most students are aware of the need for an appropriate diet and regular exercise, and they take part in the many sporting opportunities that the school provides. However, some older girls do not adopt healthy lifestyles as well as other students.

Throughout the school, students are given good opportunities to develop an understanding of citizenship. As a result, they develop a sense of belonging to the school, contribute outstandingly to local community events and show a clear understanding of other people's backgrounds. Through excellent work experience and enterprise activities, they develop team working, research and independent learning skills. With their rising standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), these skills make a good contribution to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Most lessons are planned very well based on clear learning objectives that are matched to the different abilities of students and shared fully with them. Teachers' strong subject knowledge helps them bring their lessons to life in an exciting way, engaging students so that they make progress. ICT is used successfully to motivate students. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning are effective in developing and consolidating students' understanding. Resources are chosen and used well, particularly in art and design, to stimulate students' ideas. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support students' learning. A strength underpinning teaching and learning are the good relationships between staff and students. As one parent wrote, 'There is a strong culture of mutual respect between the staff and students.' However, this effective teaching is not yet consistent across the school. Occasionally, the pace of learning is too slow and students lose interest, resulting in low-level disruption that slows their progress. Sometimes, work is not planned sufficiently well to match the different needs of students or challenging enough to ensure all students are achieving as well as they should.

Marking and feedback are effective in making students aware of how well they are doing in most lessons. The best regularly reviews pupils' work, correcting carefully and providing helpful suggestions for improvement. However, the frequency and quality of marking is variable and students are not always given clear guidance on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The needs of all pupils are met well by the broad and balanced curriculum that is reviewed and revised regularly. Students enjoy the experiences provided by recent curriculum developments including 'Learning to Learn' in the lower school and extended opportunities for work-related learning in Years 10 and 11. Effective collaboration with other institutions enables these older students to be offered a wide pool of choices. A high proportion of students successfully complete courses in the school's specialist status arts subjects in which they achieve very well. The range of arts courses has been extended to meet the different needs and talents of pupils, and increasing numbers of students are taking a second arts subject.

An exemplary range of extra-curricular activities is available to students from sporting activities and drama to producing their own newspaper. The high levels of students' participation in them make an excellent contribution to their enjoyment and achievement. A host of United Kingdom and foreign trips contribute to students' personal development. Citizenship education has improved significantly since the last inspection and, with the variety of enrichment activities available, it provides excellent opportunities for students to contribute to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, support and inclusion of students are a strength of the school. Staff know the students well, and consequently pastoral support is highly individualised. For those who need specific support, for example students for whom English is an additional language, looked after children, persistent absentees and those who experience behavioural difficulties, there is exemplary provision. The school makes excellent use of the skills of its staff and external agencies to do this. This is recognised by the local authority as a model of good practice, which is shared with other schools. Students with a hearing impairment and those from the local special school are effectively integrated into the life of the school. As one parent wrote, 'The teachers are very understanding of my child's needs.'

While there is inconsistency in the quality of short-term marking and feedback, the academic monitoring and the long-term guidance students receive are generally good. Students are very well prepared for working life through an effective personal development programme and access to careers advice. The actions of senior staff, learning mentors and counsellors have been effective in securing a significant improvement in attendance. The school meets current safeguarding requirements and has suitable procedures in place to secure the health and safety of students. Students gain much from the excellent contribution of the school's police officer to the provision for personal development and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision, strong direction and effective communication underpin the improvements the school has made since the last inspection. She analyses the school's performance accurately and implements strategies that are successful in raising the quality of care and education. In conjunction with the highly effective senior leadership team and a strong group of middle managers, she has raised expectations, inspired staff and established a robust commitment to improve the school's performance. This has been effective in creating the positive learning environment that has raised students' achievement and standards and improved their personal development and well-being, particularly their behaviour and attitudes to learning.

Lessons are monitored and evaluated thoroughly to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A range of effective professional development activities, including individual coaching, has helped staff share good practice and enhance their teaching. The school has used increasingly challenging targets, including those for its specialist subjects, to raise standards from a very low base three years ago. Performance data are used very well to track the progress of students, to identify those who are underachieving and to prompt intervention to improve their performance. The school's accurate self-evaluation takes good account of a wide range of views and evaluations of its performance, and is used very well to inform its improvement planning.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The school has a clear understanding of what is required to promote strong cohesion in the school community. The promotion of shared values has established positive relationships between students and staff. A range of activities engages students with the local community very effectively. The school's curriculum successfully develops students' understanding of the United Kingdom and global communities. This helps them learn about and understand others and value diversity. Links with schools abroad also contribute to this very well. The school evaluates its contribution to community cohesion and uses this proficiently to inform its development.

The school's leaders and managers promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination effectively. They have created an ethos of inclusion that has enabled all students to progress. The school's resources, particularly its staff, are deployed well. Accommodation and facilities have been improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors discharge their responsibilities effectively and hold the school's leaders and managers suitably to account for the school's performance while providing valuable support.

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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?	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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Henbury School, Bristol, BS10 7NJ

Thank you for the help you provided the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting members of year groups and we learned a great deal from our discussions with many of you in lessons and around the school.

We have judged the school to be satisfactory overall because your achievement is satisfactory. This is due to teaching and learning not yet being consistently good. However, the school is good in all other respects and has outstanding features. It is improving steadily and standards have been rising over recent years; in Year 9 last year, they were below average but in Year 11 they were exceptionally low. Even so, students made satisfactory progress from the time they entered the school, including those who had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In art and design, achievement was outstanding. Currently you are making better progress and you are on track to attain higher standards. Your teachers plan well and use effective strategies to help you learn. However, the pace and challenge in lessons, the extent to which work you are set matches your abilities, and the quality of marking and the feedback you receive are not yet consistently good.

Your personal development and well-being are good. You enjoy school, feel safe, demonstrate positive attitudes and behave well. You take on responsibility willingly and the way you contribute to the community is outstanding. The quality of the care, guidance and support you receive is good, and excellent for those of you who need additional help. The way the school works with others to do this is outstanding. The curriculum you receive meets your needs and capabilities well. The school's arts specialist status and the variety of extra-curricular activities you participate in have a very beneficial impact on your enjoyment and achievement.

The clear vision, strong direction and effective leadership and management of the headteacher and senior teachers are driving the school's improvement. In order to improve further, we have asked them to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, and to make teaching and learning consistently good. We have also asked that all teachers' marking and the guidance to students on what they need to do to improve be of a consistently high quality. You can really help by striving to do your very best in tests and examinations. Best wishes with your studies.

Nick Green

Her Majesty's Inspector