

# Haslingden High School Specialist Arts, Maths and Computing College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119767
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313418
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Norris 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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1444
6th form	262
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Davey JP
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eve Challinger
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Broadway Haslingden Rossendale Lancashire BB4 4EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 215726
<b>Fax number</b>	01706 219861

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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 the following issues: achievement and standards; pupils' personal development and well-being; progress of students in the sixth form; the impact of the school's specialism; and the school's use of self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records; a range of school documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own evaluations, as given in its SEF, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Haslingden High School is a larger than average size secondary school. The social background of the students is mixed with average numbers coming from areas with above average levels of deprivation. The proportion eligible and applying for free meals is below the national average. There are below average numbers of students from minority ethnic groups. Approximately 10% are from Asian or Asian British groups and 11% of students have English as an additional language. The overall proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is above average although the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities overall is average.

The school has specialist status for arts, mathematics and computing. It is a member of the 'Most improved schools club' and has achieved Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark, Investors in People (since 1999), ICT Mark, hub school status for Creative Partnerships and National Healthy School status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Haslingden High School is an outstanding school with outstanding capacity to improve further. It is highly successful in achieving its number one aim, which is to 'enable all students to achieve their full potential irrespective of their age, background or ability'. The school has significantly raised achievement and enjoyment since the previous inspection in 2003 and has worked strenuously and highly effectively to eradicate any underachievement. It is a very happy and supportive community.

Students enter the school with a broad range of attainment and a lower proportion of higher attaining students. Levels of attainment on entry have been declining slowly over the last four years. Students achieve very well in the first three years at the school. They reach standards that are above average. This very strong start is developed outstandingly well in Years 10 and 11. GCSE results are high and have been improving strongly for the last four years. Some high attaining students leave the school for their sixth form studies and this has a bearing on the school's examination results in Year 13. Nonetheless, these are above average. This reflects good progress in relation to individual students' achievement in GCSE examinations. Students in Years 7 to 11 achieve challenging targets. The school is aware that a few older boys do not always convert their strong start in Years 7 to 9 into good achievement in Key Stage 4. They have therefore introduced a number of highly successful support programmes including Study Plus and holiday booster clubs. These measures are valued by the students involved and are enabling many to re-engage with learning.

Students' personal development is outstanding in all respects. Students thoroughly enjoy their education, have excellent attitudes to learning and they report that the school provides a very safe and caring environment. They show high levels of respect for each other as they move around the school. Incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare. In a recent survey of pupils' views 'the control of bullying' was judged the school's strongest feature. Attendance is high and behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Respect for each other is a key feature and can be seen in many aspects of school life. Students develop an excellent understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives and know where to go to receive help and advice. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are excellent. Their understanding of different cultures is strongly promoted through the school's many local community links. Teachers provide excellent opportunities for discussion about moral issues such as in a Year 12 class when students considered their responses to abortion from the standpoint of those with different beliefs. The school's art, mathematics and computing specialism is a major influence in providing opportunities for students to contribute to the local and wider community. The integration of students from Tor View Special School is a particularly strong feature. The school highly values the opinion of students. Their views were instrumental in the recent refurbishment of toilet facilities. Students' involvement in enterprise activities, together with a thorough programme of careers education and guidance, helps them develop excellent skills for future employment and adult life.

Teaching is outstanding. At the heart of the work of teachers is the commitment to all students and to the development of their individual needs. The school has a buzz and drive for improvement and this is generated because teachers really enjoy their work. This approach is infectious. Students say that teachers 'walk into class with a passion for their work and a smile on their face'. Humour is used well, particularly first thing in the morning, to lift spirits and to interest the students. Teaching is frequently lively, relevant and engaging. Teachers have very

secure subject knowledge and very few non-specialists are used. Excellent relationships between students and teachers are founded on very strong trust and highly effective pastoral support. Much of this is based on the seven expectations that are prominent in many classrooms. These agreed expectations are actively supported by teachers and are consistently lived out in the classrooms. Teachers pay particular attention to the varied needs of students during their lessons but there is some variability in the identification of different groups of students in teachers' planning. Marking is helpful, informative and focused on clear targets.

Students are provided with an outstanding curriculum. They are offered a wide choice of subjects with a growing range of vocational courses and the curriculum is tailored to meet their individual needs whenever possible. This has involved effective collaborative work with other local schools and colleges. In recent years many students have completed GCSE examinations a year early in English, science and statistics. The available time has been used well in Year 11 to provide more opportunities for personal study and for additional reinforcement work. A plethora of additional support programmes, including the highly effective Study Plus programme and the introduction of reduced class sizes for some groups, ensures any hint of underachievement is quickly identified and tackled swiftly. Students are provided with opportunities to take part in a very good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities, and take-up is good despite some having fairly long distances to travel home after school.

The school benefits from outstanding leadership and management at all levels. The headteacher is outstanding and, together with the highly effective senior leadership team, has made a telling contribution in the remarkable rise in attainment and progress of students. Senior managers have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, based on a thorough analysis of data and other evidence, including lesson observations and surveys of the views of parents and students. All areas identified for improvement in the last inspection have been addressed and in some respects, have become strengths of the school. The school takes the tracking and monitoring of students' progress very seriously and invests considerable time in encouraging staff and students to understand the evaluations and conclusions that are reached. This is a key reason for the very impressive improvement in the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection. Leadership and management of subjects have been strengthened and greater responsibility has been given to key leaders to evaluate the relative success of projects and initiatives. In many areas of its work the school exceeds external targets set for it because it is determined to beat any target given. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school, are highly effective in meeting their statutory requirements and provide excellent support, as well as an appropriate level of challenge.

Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and feel it is providing an outstanding quality of education and care. They are right, it is!

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form provides a good education. It has a number of outstanding features. Many Year 11 students stay on into the sixth form but a number of higher attaining students leave for other schools. This means, although standards achieved at the end of Year 11 are high, overall attainment on entry to the sixth form is average. They make good progress and attain above average examination results. The great majority of students complete their courses successfully and many go on to university. Achievement is good overall and very strong in English, religious studies, geography and mathematics. Teaching is good. Some of it is outstanding. Students are full of praise for the staff. 'They give their time like we are part of their family' and 'they

are our friends', are regular comments made by students, some of whom have had difficulties in their learning in the past. The care, guidance and support for students and their personal development are outstanding. Students make a major contribution to the life of the school, for example, through mentoring younger students, and to the wider community, including supporting local and school based projects. The management and leadership of the sixth form are good and improving well. Superb support is provided by key members of the school's senior leadership team.

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

- Improve teachers' planning so that it always identifies group and individual learning needs.

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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?	1	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	1	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
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	1	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

<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>	1	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	1	
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	1	
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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Haslingden High School Specialist Arts, Maths and Computing College, Lancashire,  
BB4 4EY

We thoroughly enjoyed coming to your school and would like to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us so openly. We were delighted to see you really enjoy being at school and agree with your comments and the views of your parents that Haslingden High is an outstanding school. Your school is rightly proud of how you conduct yourself and the contribution so many of you make to the school and local community.

We agree that there is much outstanding teaching in many subjects and the teachers provide interesting and relevant lessons. Your teachers know their subjects very well and are keen to share their enthusiasm with you. The staff want you to do well and they work very hard to help in any way they can. You really appreciate this. Many of you told us that the school feels like 'a big friendly family'. We have just one area for improvement. We would like to see all teachers' plan their lessons so that group and individual needs are always identified.

We were particularly impressed with the way you support each other and how you behave around the school. We were struck by the friendly atmosphere and the excellent relationships between you and your teachers. They might not always tell great jokes but they always provide a very positive experience for you. Those of you who have attended other schools know that Haslingden School is very special.

We would like to give particular praise to the headteacher and the senior leadership team. They are outstanding and are an important reason for the school's dramatic improvement in recent years. You and your parents consistently told us this.

It was a real pleasure to visit your school. We wish you well in the future.

Frank Norris

Her Majesty's Inspector