Handsworth Grange School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107148
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324537
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan McKenna

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 (total)	1029
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Carole Noble
Headteacher	Ms Anne Quaile
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2006
School address	Handsworth Grange Road Handsworth Sheffield South Yorkshire S13 9HJ
Telephone number	0114 269 4801
Fax number	0114 2692832

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most of the students at this average size school are of White British heritage. About 14% of students are from a range of minority ethnic heritages and just over 5% of students are at early stages of speaking English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The area served by the school has slightly higher than average levels of social and economic disadvantage. The school is a specialist college for physical education and sport with information and communication technology (ICT). It holds several awards, including Investors in People and the Healthy Schools Award. It offers provision for the community beyond the school day.

The school has experienced a great deal of turbulence in staffing over the past year, including at senior level, with resignations of the previous headteacher and business manager and the very recent resignation of the chair of governors. The current headteacher was appointed in April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Inadequacies in leadership and governance and turbulence in staffing have had a negative impact on the school's effectiveness. Indeed, the situation was such that very recently the local authority exercised its statutory powers to intervene with the governing body because it judged governance to be insecure. A deputy headteacher was appointed as the acting headteacher during the period of uncertainty leading up to and following the resignation of the previous headteacher. Subsequently, she was appointed as the permanent headteacher in April 2008. The headteacher has worked hard and with strong commitment to steer the school through these difficulties. Supported by other senior leaders, some new in post, she has provided clear direction, created an open, constructive climate and raised staff morale. Many new management arrangements have been put in place to bring about improvement. In particular, there is a determination to ensure that the school's strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and understood so the former can be built on and the latter tackled. However, many actions are too recent to be demonstrating the impact they need. Although care, guidance and support and students' personal development are satisfactory, the quality of teaching and students' academic achievement are inadequate. Not all senior and middle leaders are fully effective. Recruiting and ensuring a full complement of effective teachers has been challenging. Along with inadequate governance, these factors are limiting the school's capacity to improve.

Students enter Year 7 with standards broadly in line with the national average. Over the past few years, however, the standards attained by students during their time in school have been below average. In 2007, both the results in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE results were below the national figures. Students' achievement was inadequate. The unvalidated 2008 results do not show signs of significant improvement and students' achievement remains inadequate. This is in part because the quality of teaching is inadequate overall. Some is good, but too little is effective enough to ensure that students learn at a fast pace. Lessons often take too little account of students' different starting points and particular needs and students are not sufficiently encouraged to become actively involved in, and to take responsibility for, their learning. Appropriate systems have been established for tracking students' progress and providing them with academic guidance and targets, but these are new and have had little impact yet. The curriculum is satisfactory, with a variety of vocational options provided in Key Stage 4 to cater for different interests and aptitudes. The range of extra-curricular activities in sport is a strength of provision. The sport and physical education specialism is starting to have an impact on teaching and the curriculum in other subjects, although this is at an early stage of development. The ICT specialism is having less impact, partly because there has been a need to equip and resource the subject.

The care, guidance and support provided for students are satisfactory, with good features of pastoral care. Students who have particular difficulties or needs receive additional, specific support, enhanced by the involvement of outside agencies. The pastoral system has just been restructured to improve the quality of provision. Students' personal development is also satisfactory. Most have positive attitudes towards school, do what is asked of them, behave

appropriately and attend regularly. They feel safe and participate in activities, such as sport, which promote healthy lifestyles. They make a positive contribution to the local community.

Since the last inspection the school's effectiveness has declined. There is, however, a willingness on the part of the school's leaders to accept external intervention and utilise outside support and expertise to help them improve it.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement.
- Ensure that governance and leadership and management at all levels are fully effective.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it ensures that all students make fast enough progress in their learning.
- Implement the new systems for tracking students' progress and ensure that they result in effective target setting and academic guidance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Over the last few years, standards throughout the school have been below average and students have not achieved as they should. In Years 9 and 11 in 2007 some of the students from minority ethnic groups, including those at early stages of speaking English, and some of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, made satisfactory progress but the vast majority did not. Unvalidated test and examination results in 2008 showed a mixed picture. At Key Stage 3 there was some improvement in English and science, although results in mathematics were static. At Key Stage 4 results in some subjects rose, but there was a decline in others, including mathematics and science. Overall, results did not improve on the previous year and the proportion of students who gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, fell. The achievement of all groups of students across the school is currently inadequate. The school did not meet most targets set for 2007 and 2008. Targets in the specialist subjects were met, with the exception of those for physical education. Tracking data suggests that the school will not meet the targets set for 2009, although it is predicting an improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most students say they enjoy their education, especially when they are able to participate actively or practically in lessons. Behaviour is satisfactory. Students generally follow instructions and are polite and considerate towards others, although a minority misbehave and disrupt learning in lessons. Students say that bullying does occur, but that the school takes it seriously and tackles incidents when reported. Attendance and punctuality, weaknesses at the previous inspection, are now satisfactory overall, although this is not yet the case for a small number of persistently absent students. Students organise special events for the community, collaborate with community groups on a variety of projects and raise funds for charities. Varied opportunities for students to gain experience in the workplace through links with local businesses enable students to become better prepared for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although some good teaching takes place, the amount that is ineffective and fails to ensure that students learn fast enough is too high. There are too many lessons in which teachers talk for too long, give mundane tasks and do not actively involve or challenge students. The result is that students are either passive or their attention wanes and, for a minority, misbehaviour follows. By contrast, in the stronger lessons explanations are clear, students are given interesting and varied activities and their learning includes assessing their own and each other's work. The use of ICT to aid learning is inconsistent. Data about students' attainment is made available to teachers, but this is rarely used to ensure that work is well matched to students' different abilities. The quality of marking is too variable. When marking is good, students are given information on the standard of their work and detailed comments on how to improve it. In other cases little feedback or guidance is given and poor spelling or presentation is accepted without comment. In some, but not all, lessons students are aware of their targets and what they need to do to meet them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

At Key Stage 4 the school offers a range of academic and vocational courses to meet the needs of students, and it works in good partnership with external providers to extend the range of the latter. At Key Stage 3 all required subjects are provided. A positive programme aimed at promoting students' literacy skills has been introduced into Year 7. However, in other year groups the range of strategies used for developing students' literacy and numeracy skills and compensating for earlier underachievement is limited. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, but systems for coordinating and monitoring provision in citizenship lack rigour. 'Stop the clock' days provide students with the opportunities to explore enterprise and work-related themes. Students enjoy and appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, and these are reasonably well attended. Community cohesion is promoted by involving students in extra-curricular activities with members of the local community, and also through links with schools in India, Uganda and Denmark.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

New pastoral systems are helping students feel well cared for; they know who to turn to for advice. Activities such as mentoring help meet the additional needs that some students have. Students' own views are sought and taken into account when deciding on steps to improve provision, such as at lunchtimes. Arrangements to promote the safeguarding and health and safety of students are in place, although some aspects of related documentation are not organised well. Systems in place to monitor and review students' progress are an improvement on those at the time of the previous inspection, but because they are new they are only just starting to inform the academic guidance given to students and the setting of targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

In challenging circumstances, the headteacher has attempted to ensure that staff now have a realistic view of what needs to be done to improve the school and that they are motivated to bring about the required changes. A more comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of provision has been introduced, aimed at providing accurate information of strengths and weaknesses. While helpful, there is still some lack of rigour. For example, the monitoring of lessons focuses more on teaching than evaluating how well students are learning and so does not provide leaders with all of the information they need to inform their strategic planning. As a result, many of the judgements the school has made about itself are over generous. However, main strengths and weaknesses are known. Some weaknesses are being tackled through the new management systems and arrangements. For example, there has not been a history of expertise in managing and analysing performance data, but a specific appointment has been made to help rectify this. Most developments, however, are too recent to have had the required impact and some weaknesses have yet to be resolved. Inadequate governance has obstructed developments in the school rather than enhance them and the governing body has not held the school properly to account or ensured its effectiveness and value for money. A recent audit of internal financial and administrative controls carried out by the local authority indicates that practice falls below the minimum acceptable level. Very few parents responded to the invitation to return a questionnaire outlining their views of the school. Of the respondents, half expressed some concerns, mainly about the quality of teaching. The school knows it has some way to go to engage fully with parents.

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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**

Overall effectiveness

How effective,efficient and inclusive is the provision of education,integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

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

[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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Handsworth Grange Community Sports College, Sheffield, S13 9HJ

As you know, your school was inspected recently. This letter is to inform you about the results of the inspection. However, first I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for talking with us during our visit.

Your school has some satisfactory features. It cares for you all and it provides extra support for those of you who particularly need it. The range of options available in Key Stage 4 helps meet your different interests. Special steps are being taken in Year 7 to help boost your literacy skills. Your participation in the good range of extra-curricular sports activities on offer helps to promote healthy lifestyles. Most of you do what teachers ask you to do in lessons, behave appropriately and attend regularly. Some of you make a helpful contribution to the community.

Overall, however, we judge that your school is not effective enough. This is because you are not achieving as well as you should or reaching the standards you are capable of. Although in some lessons you are given interesting and challenging work, too much teaching is not helping you learn fast enough. Systems have been put in place to give you better guidance on how to improve your work and to set targets for you but these are very new so haven't had much impact yet. There have been a lot of changes of staff and governors recently which have been unsettling. While your new headteacher and other leaders have worked hard to help improve the school for you, they haven't managed to put everything right. The governing body has not been supporting or challenging the school as well as it should do. We have asked the school to improve all of these areas.

We think the school needs some extra support to help it increase its rate of improvement, and we have therefore placed it in special measures. This means that extra support will be given to the school and regular checks will be made on how effectively it is improving.

You can help the teachers in your school by attending regularly, behaving well and working hard in lessons.