

# Humphry Davy School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112067
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	325521
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robert Pyner 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	743
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Katherine Uren
<b>Headteacher</b>	William Marshall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 September 1999
<b>School address</b>	Coombe Road Penzance TR18 2TG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01736 363559
<b>Fax number</b>	01736 331042

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<b>Age group</b>	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

Humphry Davy is smaller than average and serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. Since 2005, the school has been a specialist college for music and mathematics. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. However, the percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national figure. Students' difficulties include behavioural, emotional and social needs, specific learning needs including dyslexia, and sensory impairment. Most students are from a White British heritage and the percentage of young people from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English is much lower than average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average. A larger than average proportion of students leave or join the school part-way through their secondary education. The school is the base for Penwith Music Centre, through which the community has opportunities to use the school's facilities and expertise. The headteacher took up his post in September 2008.

The school has gained the Healthy School, International School, Investors in People, Artsmark and Scolliw Yah Kernow awards. The latter was awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to healthy schools work in Cornwall.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Humphry Davy is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school with a good capacity to improve further. Students' personal development and well-being and the care and support provided for them are good. About half of the parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, which is a very high return rate. Most supported the school and many appreciated the initiatives introduced by the headteacher since he took up his post. This is true for students also. Parents noted that their children were happy at the school and this comment was typical: 'The school has significantly exceeded my expectations.' A small minority of parents made negative comments about behaviour, but in observations during the inspection students' behaviour was good and any that was inappropriate was dealt with quickly and effectively. In discussion with students, they felt that behaviour was generally good with older students noting that it had improved during their time at the school.

Students join the school with average attainment. They make satisfactory progress over their time in school and, by the end of Year 11, reach standards that are broadly average. Progress in mathematics is good. In 2008, senior leaders took appropriate actions to redress a decline in standards. School data shows that focused monitoring of students' progress and effective interventions are beginning to raise standards so results are set to improve further in 2009. However, the newly developed system for identifying and addressing underachievement is not yet used consistently across the school.

Students are helped to develop into positive, well-rounded individuals. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, feel safe and enjoy school. They feel that they have an important influence on the development of the school and their views are welcomed. Students appreciate the opportunities to enrich their learning and personal development that have resulted from the school's specialist music status.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching, but it is not consistent across the school. Strengths include planning, teachers' subject knowledge and positive relationships, but too often students are passive and not actively involved enough in their learning to fully develop their understanding and skills. The satisfactory curriculum is currently being reviewed to develop a better match to the needs and interests of students. This includes the development of vocational courses with local colleges and the introduction of the creative and media diploma, which the school is leading in the area through good use of its music specialist status.

The senior leadership team has recently been reorganised, and its members display a drive to raise achievement and provide as wide a range of opportunities for students as possible. This is a period of change with middle leaders developing their roles within the new leadership structure in the school. It is very important that leaders at this level are fully engaged in the consistent implementation of the new systems which are aimed at improving achievement and standards for students. The governing body are well informed about the school's balance of strengths and weaknesses and are developing greater confidence in challenging the school to improve further.

The specialism in music is a particular strength that pervades many areas of students' achievement and personal development, from learning an instrument to a general appreciation of music. The school has gained regional and national recognition for its work in this subject, and it enhances greatly the links with the local community.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all middle leaders are fully engaged in the management of change to bring about sustained improvement.
- Raise the quality of teaching, particularly by developing more opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning in order to reach appropriately challenging targets.
- Raise attainment further by ensuring that all staff use the school system for identifying and addressing underachievement consistently.

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

Students join the school with attainment that is broadly average. The results in 2008 showed that attainment by Year 9 students had improved and was broadly in line with the national average. Results in science were particularly impressive and above average at the expected and higher levels. School data show that this improved performance should be consolidated this year. The 2008 results for Year 11 showed that the standards attained, including the proportion of students who achieve five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics, were below average but improving. Focused work with Year 11 students based on improved monitoring of students' progress has led to significant improvement in the predicted attainment for students this year, which is in line with national figures. Given their starting points when they enter the school, students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able, make satisfactory progress overall and this has improved significantly over the last two years. The progress made by students in mathematics is good because of effective teaching based on thorough assessment and intervention with students who are underperforming. Standards in music at GCSE are broadly average and the school has worked hard to develop appropriate curricular options which will engage and interest students. School progress data indicates that attainment is set to improve this year in GCSE and BTEC courses.

A project working with a group of students to overcome barriers to learning has been particularly successful in ensuring greater engagement and attendance, which in turn has resulted in improved achievement.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Students at Humphry Davy enjoy school and in lessons display positive attitudes and are eager to learn. Students' behaviour is good. They demonstrate respectful and positive relationships towards one another and staff. Students understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and display mature attitudes in practical activities, for example in design and technology and science lessons. Students feel safe in school and they say that the rare cases of bullying are dealt with effectively by the school. Students understand the importance of living healthily and many make informed choices reflecting this. The school has attained a Healthy Schools award and is now working to extend this to the next stage.

The number of exclusions from the school has fallen significantly since the last inspection because it now employs a wide range of successful strategies to address any disruptive and

challenging behaviour, including a much greater emphasis on rewarding a positive attitude to learning. However, some students feel that there should be more structured opportunities to restore relationships between teachers and students following a student's removal from a lesson. Students' average attainment in basic skills such as numeracy and literacy means that they are developing satisfactory skills necessary for their future economic well-being. There are, however, some good examples of projects involving specific groups such as the successful production and sale of products made from old record albums. Attendance over the past year has improved significantly and the school has exceeded the targets for school attendance set by the local authority. The proportion of persistent absentees is now half that of the national figure. The school listens carefully to students' views and uses these effectively to inform school improvement. An example of this is the recent student health survey. There is good evidence of local community involvement, especially through music and sport.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Whilst there are many good lessons, the quality of teaching is not consistent. In general, teachers plan lessons well with clear learning objectives and outcomes specified at the start of lessons. Positive relationships exist between teachers and students and where there are strong classroom management skills, students work hard and with success. In the better lessons students enjoy their work on assignments that are structured to promote their active involvement and develop their independent learning skills. However, in a significant number of lessons the students are in a passive learning mode, rather than one in which they are actively and independently involved in their own learning so they can make greater progress. Students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well catered for, and supported by committed and resourceful learning support assistants. Marking is regular in most subjects but lacks the detail which would enable students to understand the next steps in their learning. Generally, students are aware of the level at which they are operating in most of their subjects but are not aware of what they need to do, and which skills they should develop, to progress further. The specialist music status makes a very real contribution to teaching and learning across the curriculum, ensuring that both personal and academic development takes place through the skills it introduces.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school curriculum currently offers fairly broad and balanced provision. However, it is in a state of transition under the leadership of the new headteacher and restructured senior leadership team, and is being developed to better match the needs and interests of the students. A greater involvement in vocational courses, in part through links with local colleges, is raising the motivation of many students. As lead school for the diploma in creative arts and media within the local consortium of secondary schools, the school has successfully extended the boundaries of its own specialism.

The use of information and communication technology has not yet been integrated into all curricular areas to underpin the skills of the classroom and to give areas for enrichment. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and targeted to their individual needs. There are many opportunities for extra-curricular and extension activities offered by the school and local community; however the take-up by students is relatively modest. The

music specialism gives students good opportunities to develop skills and talents, including self-motivation and confidence, which become extended into other areas of their learning, and also enhances extra-curricular provision. It gives students strong links with the local community which extend their horizons further.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The good quality of care, guidance and support results in positive outcomes in all aspects of students' personal development and well-being. Health and safety, risk assessment and child protection procedures fully meet national requirements. The safe environment and caring ethos found in the school are appreciated by students and their parents. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well. The highly inclusive ethos of the school ensures that vulnerable students are well catered for with an extensive range of strategies to support their learning and personal development. The school works effectively and in close partnership with a wide variety of external agencies, such as the local pupil referral unit and the education welfare service, to support vulnerable learners. Over the last year the school has introduced a rigorous system for tracking and monitoring students' academic progress. This is now providing a clearer picture of students' individual strengths and weaknesses, enabling effective intervention where required. This is beginning to have an impact on achievement for older students but is not yet used consistently to ensure all students reach challenging targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The recently appointed headteacher has provided clarity of purpose and direction and is deeply committed to securing quality in every aspect of the school's work. His initial review of systems and practice identified strengths and areas for development and these have been well planned for through the detailed school improvement plan. This systematic approach to self-evaluation means that the school knows itself well.

The headteacher's strong leadership is complemented by a restructured senior management team with drive and ambition. They work cohesively to ensure that both personal development and academic achievement are priorities. The energy and capacity shown by senior leaders are not yet consistently evident across the middle leaders, although they now have a better understanding of their role. Reorganisation is giving them the opportunity to develop their particular areas of responsibility and to focus on ways to improve students' standards and achievement.

The school is developing students' understanding of the wider community in Europe and globally, and recently established international partnerships, linked with schools in very different parts of Britain, will further support this. Understanding of the needs of the local community is strong and the school is now evaluating its community strategy in order to plan for further development. Governors now feel well informed about the school's achievements and priorities and as a result they provide an appropriate balance of support and challenge. Through self-evaluation and training they have established an effective committee structure and agreed development objectives linked to the vision for the school.

Designation as a specialist music school has brought many new opportunities to the school at a local and national level. Links with partner schools and the wider community are strong, giving

the school a distinctive role within the region. Good practice in music and mathematics is disseminated. The music department has been recognised as a lead area in the use of data to enable student tracking. It has also ensured that a high majority of lessons throughout the school have a music element and that learning skills acquired through performance are recognised and used effectively. The mathematics department has played a significant role in supporting school and county-wide improvement, for example in leading the development of assessment of pupils' progress.

Schemes such as lead learners and the music scholarships have highlighted quality and also provided role models for students throughout the school. Specialist school status is highly significant in the life of the school and the personal development of students, and funding offers very good value.



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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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?	3
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	3
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**

■ 19 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Humphry Davy School, Penzance TR18 2TG

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school recently. Special thanks go to the student guides who helped the inspectors find their way around, and it was very interesting to hear what you had to say about life at the school. We enjoyed talking with all the students we met and found what you had to say very informative and relevant.

This letter is to tell you about our findings. Our judgement is that Humphry Davy School is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school with a good capacity to improve further. We were impressed by your behaviour and the quality of your relationships with adults and other students. Your work in the specialism of music is a strength. You are well cared for and supported and, overall, you make satisfactory progress, reaching standards that are in line with national averages. This year close monitoring of the progress of Year 11 students has shown that achievement can be improved further and the predicted grades for this year back this up. Teaching is satisfactory although you could have more opportunities to use information on what you need to do to improve your work, to take responsibility for your own learning and challenge yourselves to improve. You and your parents told us that you feel safe and supported and appreciate the changes made by your headteacher since he was appointed.

This is an important period in the development of your school. Your headteacher, senior leaders and governors already recognise that there are areas to be improved, and these are the aspects the inspection team judged that need to be addressed.

- Ensure that all middle leaders are fully involved in school development.
- Improve teaching by giving you more opportunities to take responsibility for your own learning, so you can reach challenging targets.
- Ensure that all staff use the school system for identifying and addressing underachievement consistently well.

However, every member of the school community needs to work together and you have an important part to play in supporting the staff to bring about these improvements. You should continue to work hard and make the most of the wide range of opportunities you have at school. I am sure that you will do so and wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector