

Hind Leys Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120274
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327243
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	14–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	652
Sixth form	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Nash
Headteacher	Yvonne Lee
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2006
School address	Forest Street Shepshed Loughborough LE12 9DB
Telephone number	01509 504511
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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 smaller than average but the sixth form is similar in size to the national average. Students join the school at age 14, mostly from two local high schools. The great majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion who are eligible for free school meals are both below national averages. The proportion of students who have statements of special educational needs is above average. The school was designated as a specialist college for the arts in September 2008. There is a privately run nursery and pre school on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, as is the sixth form. Initially, since the last inspection, it made strong improvement and students' achievement was good. However, a number of factors militated against it sustaining this improvement, including a budget deficit, staff turnover and absence. The designation of specialist arts status and greater staffing stability, which includes new membership to the senior leadership team, has brought renewed vigour and purpose. It is raising aspirations for both staff and students. A critical impact of recovery already evident is the early identification of underachievement and deployment of the right strategies to tackle it. Currently, achievement is satisfactory, although the proportion of students who attain five good passes at GCSE, including English and mathematics, is below average. Senior leaders are focusing particularly on raising standards in mathematics where improvement has been slower. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. However, some subjects deliver consistently good or better lessons. Here, teachers use a variety of techniques and students are actively involved in their learning. The dissemination of the best practice, which is also evident in the sixth form, is not used sufficiently well in order to improve the quality of teaching further, thus enabling students to achieve better from the time they start at Hind Leys.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students enjoy attending school, as reflected in their good attendance and the attitudes displayed in lessons. Specialist arts status is helping to enhance the opportunities for them to participate in activities that are underpinned by a good curriculum. This helps to ensure that students' contribution to school and the wider community is good, as well as preparing students well for their future life beyond school. Staff take great care to encourage students to live healthily and to remain safe. Students usually respond positively to this encouragement. They report that the few instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. The fixed-term rate of exclusions is low because students have good relationships with each other and the school uses a range of methods to be inclusive. The learning and support base provides good support for students who have a wide range of personal and learning needs. Parents greatly value this facility. Academic guidance is satisfactory and managers at all levels are keen to lift the use of challenging targets and marking of students' work to that of the best that is evident in some subjects.

The headteacher offers strong leadership. Senior leaders have an accurate knowledge of strengths and weaknesses and are now providing the drive to tackle underachievement, particularly in mathematics. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and senior leaders have robust links with faculty leaders and departments. From this secure foundation, challenging targets are now set and timely checks made to ensure a reversal in underperformance. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory. The school provides sound value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Overall standards are average and, over recent years, achievement has been inconsistent, ranging from good to satisfactory by the end of Year 13. The school's data for the 2008 examination results indicate that students made satisfactory progress. Currently, students are making good progress in lessons, reflecting the good teaching they now receive. Leadership and management are good because suitable actions have been taken to improve a minority of underperforming subjects, although this has yet to be fully reflected in examination results.

Students' personal development is good. They are well motivated and enjoy their studies. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning so that they develop independent learning skills well. A particularly notable feature is students' leadership in performing art productions and school sports events. Trained sixth form mentors support younger students with their studies to good benefit. Students also engage in a wide variety of charity fund raising events, reflecting their maturity and commitment. The curriculum is good. It offers a broad range of AS- and A-level courses. The recent addition of a number of vocational courses meets the needs of a wide range of students. Good guidance is provided at the end of Year 11, including for those students who go to other institutions, so that students enroll for appropriate courses. The retention rate of students progressing to Year 13 is good and many go on to further and higher education. Students' experiences are enriched through effective partnerships with a range of post-16 providers. This helps students to be well prepared for their future careers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise GCSE attainment in mathematics to the level seen in science and English, in order to improve overall standards by the end of Year 11.
- Ensure that the dissemination of best practice in teaching and learning is effective in improving the proportion of lessons that are consistently good or better.

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 the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students enter the school with broadly average standards and they make satisfactory progress. Results in GCSE examinations have been broadly average. In 2007, the proportion of students who attained five or more A* to C grades, including in English and mathematics, rose significantly from the previous year to be just above the national average. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2008 indicate a dip, particularly in mathematics, where standards are below average. Evidence from the school's internal assessment records, scrutiny of students' work and lesson observations indicate that the right strategies are in place to tackle this decline, based on an accurate analysis of why students did not make the expected progress. Targets set are challenging, especially for the current Year 11 and, if met, should see an improvement. Art and music are two of the three lead subjects for the school's specialist status and results in these subjects continue to be above average. As a result of effective monitoring and well-tailored support, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully through assemblies and lessons, and its strength is seen in students' participation in a range of communal activities. All these enable students to show good self-discipline, understand diversity and equality and make a positive contribution to the community. Students enjoy school, as reflected in their above average attendance, the usually good attitudes displayed in lessons and the low exclusion rate. Students show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Extra-curricular activities, offered during lunchtimes and after school, have good numbers of participants. These

are organised by staff, but others, including fund raising events, students organise for themselves thereby developing their sense of responsibility. Students gain good awareness of sustainable development by becoming involved in ventures like the Honduras Eco-Project 2008 or by volunteering for the Fair Trade Committee. The majority leave school well prepared for further education and their future economic well-being because of the skills acquired through work experience, young enterprise activities and dedicated units on financial planning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Students are making the best progress when given opportunities to be active learners, for example by working collaboratively to solve a problem or to think independently. Their participation in peer and self-assessment enables them to form an accurate view of their current grades and progress towards their targets. Regular monitoring of students' progress, using a recently introduced fit-for-purpose tracking system, is enabling teachers to use this information to provide shorter, focussed tasks to ensure students' interest. In some lessons, however, too much of their time is spent listening to the teacher, resulting in some students losing concentration and motivation, and progress is slowed. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well analysed and met and, as a result, they make good progress. More widely, students make good progress, particularly in those subjects incorporating the school's arts specialism, where teaching is consistently good or outstanding. However, this calibre of teaching is not consistent across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum that is continually developing in response to students' needs. Individualised programmes of study, work related learning and flexible timetabling suitably support those who most need it. Those who want to follow vocational courses can do so, in school and in partnership institutions. Opportunities to promote students' personal development through the arts, music, dance and sport are particularly effective. The good range of extra-curricular activities includes many cultural, sporting and musical opportunities. Participation is high and does much to encourage teamwork and enjoyment of school. Students of all abilities access a wide range of trips and visits, at home and abroad. The enhancement of provision through additional support for those students who are at risk of underachieving, including after school activities, helps to raise their confidence. Whilst some of the elements of curriculum provision are relatively new and their full impact is not yet apparent in good academic achievement, students' appreciation of this responsive curriculum is positive.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Students say that they feel safe and well supported. Pastoral arrangements are strong and students speak highly of the personal support they receive from their tutors. Well-planned transition arrangements from the high schools enable students to settle quickly and learn school routines. Health and safety procedures are comprehensive and risk assessments are up to date. Arrangements for safeguarding students are robust and child protection procedures meet

statutory requirements. Careers advice and guidance are well organised and delivered and increasing numbers of students are continuing into the sixth form. Students' academic guidance is satisfactory. More challenging targets are now set and the scrutiny of students' progress towards them is increasingly robust, though not yet reflected in examination results. Some inconsistencies remain in the marking of students' work which prevents some students from making better progress over time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Until recently, the senior leadership team's effectiveness has been restricted by staff turnover. However, a strengthening of the team means that senior leaders now make a forceful team for school improvement. Their detailed knowledge of the school is enabling them to set challenging targets, aimed to lift teaching and learning to a higher level. Self-evaluation at faculty level is detailed and accurate in most cases. In a minority of department reviews, there is not enough focus on improving the consistency and quality of teaching. The identification of underperformance is now more rapid because senior leaders' link to faculties is increasingly robust. The school involves parents and students in school improvement and takes good account of a range of views to inform school development planning. Priorities for improvement are suitable because they link closely to students' measurable outcomes. Students have opportunities to encounter community and cultural diversity, resulting in good community cohesion. Governors are able to hold the school to account through their various committees. Overall, corporate governance is satisfactory. Stability in the school's finances means that governors are now in a better position to focus more sharply on securing improvement in standards.

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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?	3	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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	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	2	
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	2	

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
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	3	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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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	

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

17 October 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hind Leys Community College, Forest Street, Loughborough, LE11 9DB

Thank you for welcoming me and the other inspectors to your school. We appreciated your help and conversations with us. They assisted us in understanding what your school is like and informed our judgements.

We think that yours is a satisfactory school, including the sixth form. Some elements of it are good, including your attendance, behaviour in lessons and your positive attitudes to learning. The school also provides a good curriculum and we were impressed with your involvement in all the enrichment activities which enable you to enjoy school life. Staff, including senior leaders, have worked hard to obtain the recent arts specialist status. Your contribution through designing the new school logo and participation in the numerous performing and fine arts is creditable and reflects some of the strong subjects where teaching and learning are good. However, overall, we judged that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is your achievement from the time you start at Hind Leys. In 2008, five good passes at GCSE dropped and were below the national average, but we believe that senior leaders have identified the causes of this decline and have the right strategies in place to improve.

They agree with us that GCSE standards, especially with regard to you attaining five good passes including English and mathematics, should be higher. We have asked them to improve your attainment, particularly in mathematics, and to share the good teaching that is evident in some subjects more widely, so that you leave school having attained better GCSE passes. You can help by acting on the guidance given by teachers when they review your performance. They have raised their aspirations for you and you can work with them to ensure that challenging targets that are now set are met.

Thank you again for making our two days so enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala Her Majesty's Inspector