

Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124425
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	328137
Inspection date	4 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1320
Sixth form	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Simkin
Headteacher	John Martin
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2006
School address	Saredon Road Cheslyn Hay Walsall WS6 7JQ
Telephone number	01922 416024
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Inspector's evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum; care, guidance and support; the sixth form; and the quality of leadership and management.

Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; achievement and attainment information; observation of lessons; scrutiny of documentation provided by the school; observation of the school at work; discussion with senior managers; talking to governors and students; and an analysis of parents' questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Cheslyn Hay is a large specialist sports college which serves a socially and economically diverse area in the south of Staffordshire near Walsall. It is oversubscribed. Virtually all students come from a White British background. The proportion of students eligible for free schools meals is well below average. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, while the number of students with a statement of special educational needs is average. It holds a number of prestigious awards including Healthy School, Sportsmark, Diana Memorial Gold Award, Innovation Award, and Financial Management Standards in Schools, and the school is also an FA Charter Standard School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cheslyn Hay is a good school with some outstanding features. Specialist status continues to provide a catalyst for innovation and improvement. It is an inclusive school where care, guidance and support are outstanding thus enabling students to achieve well. Students feel very safe because of the quality of their relationships and trust in teachers to resolve any issues to do with bullying and racism. The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as demonstrated in personal well-being lessons and focus days. Students adopt healthy lifestyles, with many taking part regularly in the wide range of sporting opportunities on offer. Most learners enjoy their education and find lessons interesting and, as a result, attendance is above average. There has been a reduction in the number of students who are persistent absentees. Students are well behaved in lessons, with the few minor disruptions dealt with swiftly by staff. Positive behaviour is promoted well through all year group assemblies and posters in each classroom. Zero tolerance on low-level disruption has been introduced. Behaviour during break and lunchtime is good, with students showing respect for each other, staff and their environment. There have been no permanent exclusions at the school since 2004 and the number of fixed-term exclusions has decreased dramatically.

The students make a positive contribution to the school community. They are engaged in their learning, want to succeed and take part in school's activities and are shaping the school's policies via a number of very active councils. They contribute by organising charity events and the annual strawberry tea for senior citizens in the community. Students' economic well-being and workplace skills are outstanding. The quality of the careers programme and guidance from Year 8 onwards is excellent. The students feel they can make informed post-14 and post-16 choices because of the high quality of advice given by the teachers. They are very well prepared for the future because of the highly effective curriculum and the increasing improvements in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.

Students start Cheslyn Hay with attainment that is broadly average. They make good progress by the end of Year 11 and standards continue to rise. Achievement is therefore good and standards are above average. The rate of progress during Key Stage 3 is not yet high enough but improvements in 2008 saw more students reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 9. GCSE results continue to improve and the school achieved its best ever results in 2008. The percentage of students obtaining an A* to C grade, including English and mathematics, has increased significantly to be above the national average. The school has worked hard to close the gap between girls and boys and there are no significant variations between groups of students. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Targets were met or exceeded at Key Stage 4. Short courses in citizenship and religious studies are very successful. The percentage of students achieving an A* or A grade in GCSE is increasing. Results for the applied vocational courses were very good in business studies and Business and Technology Education Council sport but were weaker on other courses. Performance in the specialist subject of physical education (PE) is outstanding and well above the average. Inspection evidence confirms that, overall, current Year 11 students are on track to attain above average standards. Results from the early-entry examinations taken by some students indicate a continuing upward trend.

Teaching is good. Lessons start promptly and in an orderly manner and there are well-established routines. Teachers have good subject knowledge and thus ensure there is a clear focus on specialist terminology and language. Many teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboard

technology to engage students in their learning. There is good support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from effective learning support assistants. Relationships between staff and students are very positive. There are some excellent examples of marking with specific advice on how to improve in subjects such as English, art, history, design technology and mathematics. Students are aware of their targets and both the quality and quantity of written work are of a high standard. In a small minority of lessons, there is insufficient regular marking and lessons are not challenging enough to push along the pace at which students learn.

The curriculum is outstanding and kept under constant review so it continually meets the needs and aspirations of students. The personal and economic well-being programme is given high prominence. Issues, for example, the low take-up of modern foreign languages, have been addressed, with changes in the curriculum in Key Stage 3 and the introduction of Spanish in Year 10. A major strength of the school is the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sports, and various trips and visits. These include residentials, trips abroad and participation in enterprise activities in modern foreign languages. The school is part of the Chase Collegiate, a consortium of local schools and a local further education college; this has enabled the school to broaden the curricular options available to students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. A small number of students at Key Stage 4 successfully take part in alternative provision at local colleges.

Sports college status continues to be a real strength. It has had an impact on raising standards across the school, contributing to improved teaching and learning and the development of coaching and mentoring. Most subjects have learning schemes linked to the specialism. Specialist status is a vibrant aspect of the school which has successfully broadened the experience of students, with opportunities for orienteering, with a Year 7 outdoor adventure residential and an annual Year 8 sports tour. More girls take up PE courses and there are a variety of healthy challenges throughout the year, such as the marathon challenge and the Year 7 'wake up and shake'. Students are actively involved in the sports council and junior sports leadership awards and peer mentoring. Peer mentors work effectively with the community and learning partnership programme and have assisted local senior citizens in a series of outdoor challenges such as rock climbing. Standards in PE in partner schools have risen at primary and secondary level as a direct result of the school's specialist status. Through working with the district council, many new opportunities now exist for the local community such as over fifties fitness sessions and a parent and toddler swimming group.

Many aspects of care, guidance and support are outstanding. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place. The school has exemplary systems meeting all legal requirements which ensure that the safety and well-being of all students is paramount. Students say they can turn to any member of staff for help. Vulnerable students are well supported, particularly through the outstanding work of the learning support team and the Learning Support Unit, which is providing an impressive range of services to support this group of students. The school is providing students with challenging targets and good guidance on how to meet them. Students are well informed about their progress and a wide range of intervention strategies are in place to help raise standards. The school has outstanding links and partnerships with a wide range of outside agencies to provide specialised support and develop community collaboration.

This all happens because of good leadership and management. The headteacher provides dynamic and focused leadership and a clear sense of direction. The rest of the senior management team capably support him. Self-evaluation is outstanding. It is accurate and the school has a clear agenda of what it needs to do to improve. Rigorous systems for evaluating teaching and learning are in place and the school is clear about identifying strengths and

weaknesses that impact on student performance. This is helping the school to secure sustained improvement in many areas of its work. Based on the successful impact of actions so far, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve. In most subject areas, middle leaders are proactive in evaluating the performance of their teams, making decisions about the organisation of teaching in their areas and supporting their staff. As yet, there is still too much variation in the performance of different subjects at both Key Stage 3 and 4. The school is committed to inclusion and equality of opportunity, which permeate many aspects of the school's work. The governors provide good support and challenge for the school and are very involved in the school's work. The school has strong links with the local community and is proactive in evaluating its contribution to community cohesion at national and international levels.

The percentage of parents who responded to the questionnaires was very low. The majority of parents who replied were very positive about the quality of education the school provides. The small number of varied concerns that were raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the headteacher.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Standards in the sixth form are below average and have fluctuated; this reflects the broad range of ability of those students who enter the sixth form. Based on their starting points, students make satisfactory progress in the sixth form but there are pockets of underachievement. Current school tracking data and progress seen in lessons indicate more students are on course to meet or exceed their targets. Retention rates are good and an increasing number of students go on to higher education. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. There is insufficient challenge in some lessons and the development of independent learning is inconsistent. Assessment and marking are variable in quality and do not always indicate precisely what students need to do to improve. Students mention they would like more one-to-one subject guidance on how to improve. They appreciate the general guidance provided for them via such programmes as the excellent well-being assemblies. Students are enthusiastic, confident and very positive about the support they receive on a day-to-day basis. The curriculum is good, and whilst mainly academic, it is changing to incorporate more vocational courses. Sixth form students are actively involved in the school community, mentoring younger students, undertaking sports coaching, and acting as learning assistants. Leadership and management are good, with monitoring and evaluation improving. The sixth form focus group, involving staff, governors and students, has set an agenda for improvement. The school has implemented a number of strategies to improve achievement and they are starting to make a difference. This includes the rigorous tracking of student progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the variation in the achievement in different subjects at all key stages.
- Improve teaching and learning in the sixth form so it is more challenging and provides students with clear and consistent advice on how to improve to enable more to meet or exceed their targets.

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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?	2	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?	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
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	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**

Inspection of Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community High School, Walsall, WS6 7JQ

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. Many of you told us that you enjoyed school and we were impressed by your behaviour. You go to a good school with some outstanding features. Our main findings are:

- GCSE results continue to rise and the school achieved its best ever results in 2008
- you are making good progress in your personal development and feel very safe at school
- the quality of teaching is good and only a small minority of lessons are not challenging enough
- the school provides an outstanding choice of subjects which suit you as individuals, and the range of extra-curricular activities is extensive
- staff provide excellent care, support and guidance and you know who to turn to for help
- the school prepares you exceptionally well for your future
- the sport specialism has brought you many benefits and opportunities; it is a real strength and a vibrant part of the school with lots of exciting sporting activities
- the dynamic leadership of the headteacher and the very capable leadership team ensure there is a clear focus on improvement
- the school's leaders, governors and dedicated and committed staff have been very successful in providing you with a good quality of education
- there remains too much variation in how well you do in different subjects across all year groups
- the sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education.

We have asked the headteacher and senior managers to do the following:

- reduce the variation in how well you do in your different subjects in all year groups
- improve teaching and learning in the sixth form so they are more challenging and provide you with clear and consistent advice on how to improve to enable more of you to meet or exceed your targets.

We encourage you to continue to support the school and play your part in making it even better. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector