

# Higham Lane School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125741
<b>Local Authority</b>	Warwickshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328393
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Victoria Godley

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)	1209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stuart Whitby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Phill Kelly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	Shanklin Drive Nuneaton CV10 0BJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	02476 388123
<b>Fax number</b>	02476 370550

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Higham Lane School is a popular school that is oversubscribed. The school is larger than most secondary schools. Most students are of White British backgrounds. The percentage of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is below the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school gained specialist business and enterprise status in 2003 and the school became an enterprise hub school in 2006 through which it offers training on business and enterprise to schools within the area.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Higham Lane School is a good school with a number of outstanding features. Students are proud to attend and speak of their school with pride. The high quality pastoral care students receive is a key factor in securing their outstanding personal development and well-being. The school's specialist status has had a positive impact upon raising standards, developing business and enterprise days and through related curriculum activities. The wide range of learning opportunities, together with the very supportive atmosphere that exists within the school, enables students to develop into mature and confident young adults, who show a strong sense of responsibility and a genuine concern for others.

Leaders, managers and governors have made significant improvements to the school since the last inspection. For example, outstanding leadership has resulted in rapidly rising standards demonstrating an outstanding capacity for further improvement. There are now high levels of accountability with leaders at all levels monitoring students' progress. Self-evaluation is accurate; the senior team know the school very well and are perceptive in their judgments about its effectiveness. The school is not complacent about its success and is committed to improving students' life chances.

Standards are well above average overall and achievement is good in both key stages. Different groups of students achieve equally as well. Teaching and learning are also good. A significant emphasis has been placed on developing teaching to ensure students are engaged, and enjoy their learning. The impact of this was seen in the vast majority of lessons during the inspection. The notable improvement in teaching has been brought about by clear systems of continuous professional development and the sharing of best practice. However, there still needs to be a greater consistency of marking and assessment for learning, across all departments, so that students clearly understand how to make their next steps in learning.

The curriculum is good and a range of vocational courses are offered, as well as a fast track mathematics course for more-able students. The school is rightly reviewing its curriculum to ensure there is enough opportunity for the full range of ability to achieve their potential. There is a very broad range of extra-curricular activities and good opportunities to participate in a range of sporting activities. National and local charities and events are enthusiastically supported; for example, the whole school raised funds for a sponsored expedition to Antarctica.

Care, guidance and support, particularly for the most vulnerable students, are outstanding and contribute to the inclusive ethos of the school. All students have targets and the tracking of their progress is thorough. Students relish opportunities to take responsibility. The contribution of the Student Voice and the development of the Junior Leadership Team to informing the future development of the school is a strength. One student commented, 'There's so much to do. Teachers really listen to our views.'

The school is an integral part of the local community and links with external partners extend the impact of its work, both locally and internationally. The specialist status has done much to drive progress in this area. Members of the local community have benefited from extended learning opportunities such as the 'Silver Surfers' computer club. The school works hard to promote awareness of other faiths and cultures. It is making a good contribution to community cohesion through its work with a range of partners, its strong parental links and specialist college activities.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency of marking in all subjects, so that students clearly understand how to make the important next steps in their learning.
- Develop further opportunities for students to follow a curriculum that is closely tailored to their individual needs.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Students enter the school with above average standards. Good teaching enables them to make good progress across Years 7 to 11 and reach standards that are well above the national average.

In Key Stage 3, overall progress has been consistently good for several years, particularly in English. Progress is satisfactory in mathematics and science; leaders have identified this and have closely monitored these departments and progress is now improving. Standards at the end of Year 9 are well above average.

Detailed tracking enables the school to provide successful intervention packages for individual students, and progress in Key Stage 4 improved markedly in 2008, where the school enjoyed its best-ever GCSE results. The proportion of students gaining five GCSE grades A\* to C, including in English and mathematics, was significantly higher than the national average. Lower attaining students also achieved well with most gaining five GCSE grades A\* to G. Progress in English and mathematics is good. French, music, physical education, applied information and communication technology (ICT) and applied business are areas of strength. In 2008, targets in the specialist subjects were exceeded in applied business studies and ICT and were met in GCSE business studies and mathematics. Progress in Year 11 is good and students are on track to reach their challenging targets.

There is no significant difference in progress between different groups of students. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress equally as well as others.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Students enjoy coming to school and demonstrate their commitment with high levels of attendance. They behave well and enjoy working together on projects, many of which are initiated and led by students. Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is the result of the wide range of opportunities that the school provides to support this aspect. Open days give students the chance to demonstrate a range of diverse skills such as henna hand painting and Chinese art.

Students have an excellent knowledge of how to live healthily and what they should do to stay safe. Any problems are dealt with quickly and efficiently and there is always someone available to help them resolve any personal or academic concerns. Students appreciate the sense of school community and, in turn, make a real contribution to it and the wider community. Older students willingly support younger students in partner primary schools, as well as working with parents in workshops on safe Internet use. The students' views are valued by the school. The Student Voice and Junior Leadership Team act as catalysts for improvements, such as the refurbishment of toilets, complete with sensor taps and the building of a new bicycle shelter to encourage healthy lifestyles.

The school's specialist status has a very positive impact on the students' economic well-being. They benefit from a wide range of activities including enterprise challenge days, where businesses act as facilitators and provide good advice on future options.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students feel comfortable in lessons and feel able to learn, due to the good working atmosphere. Teachers' subject knowledge is often outstanding and they are skilled at including business and enterprise elements that help students understand the purpose of their learning. Lessons are consistently well-planned in all subjects and clear learning objectives, outlining assessment criteria, are often referred to throughout lessons. Lessons are fast paced and present good challenge for the most able students. However, occasionally teachers move on too fast for middle and lower ability students to keep up with their learning. Whilst marking is regularly carried out, it is inconsistent in the degree to which it provides feedback to students to help them improve their work. Similarly, strategies to engage middle and lower ability students more fully, for example through direct questioning, are, at times, underdeveloped.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is currently under review to encompass the changes at Key Stage 3 and age 14 to 19 requirements. The school already provides some vocational programmes, but currently provides limited opportunities for more individual pathways for students of all abilities. In keeping with the school's specialism, all students have good opportunities to participate in business and enterprise activities. For example, 'champions' are attached to each department and lead on enterprise, building up student expertise, confidence and capability. The provision of ICT has increased substantially across the school and students clearly appreciate how this is very well integrated into the curriculum.

High quality displays, which include students' work, cover a wide range of subjects and contribute to the school's sense of purpose. There is a vast array of extra-curricular activities which are well attended. These have a very positive impact on students' self-esteem. The school's teams recently became county champions in football and netball.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

A comprehensive system is used to monitor student progress and ensures early intervention is planned effectively. Students' overall academic progress is tracked on a termly basis, giving both parents and students a clear view of progress. Parents particularly have welcomed this new development. Students know their targets and what they have to do to progress and are offered additional opportunities to meet with teachers for further support. The pastoral care and support that students receive, including vulnerable students, are outstanding. In particular, support and guidance to looked-after children ensures that the curriculum is personalised and intervention is targeted at need. Teachers and support staff work well together and with a range of agencies including Social Services, Education Welfare and Connexions. There are effective strategies in place to address persistent absence and good home-school links through text and email, to inform parents of issues in school. Students are well informed about what

to expect in the next stage of their education through excellent, planned transition learning units and there are regular face-to-face activities involving Higham Lane students working in partner primary schools. Careers guidance and mentoring systems are well integrated into the curriculum.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leaders have an outstanding vision for Higham Lane School, which is being realised through effective distributed leadership and a school-wide commitment to ensuring the best possible outcomes for all learners. The headteacher and senior leadership team are passionate about the school and lead by example. Sharp and accurate self-evaluation has resulted in the identification of priorities that can lead to further improvement. Processes for checking how well the school is doing are rigorous and embedded, ensuring areas for development are quickly identified. Improvement strategies are well chosen and examples of the impact of work to address underperformance are seen in rising standards at each key stage. Targets set are challenging, and accountability for students' progress is well supported by links with line managers and performance management procedures. Governance is outstanding. Governors are highly committed to helping the school improve and are well informed about its strengths, and areas for development. They challenge appropriately, have a clear holistic view of the school and endeavour to take part in school life as often as they can. The specialist programme is very well led and managed and senior and middle leaders have a clear vision for its future development. On-going initiatives, both within the school and with external partners, are making a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. International links with schools from other continents enable the students to appreciate and understand better the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom as well as in other parts of the world. The school uses a number of different strategies to engage with the local community, including seeking and acting upon the views of parents. Parents have an overwhelmingly positive view of the school and it has a very good reputation within the local community. There is a real desire to achieve here.

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

**Achievement and standards**

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

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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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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**

6 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Higham Lane School, Nuneaton, CV10 0BJ

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team into your school. We appreciated how you talked to us in your lessons and shared your opinions about Higham Lane School. Your views and those of your parents have helped us to understand what your school is like. Your school is a good school with outstanding features. It is ambitious for all of you and keeps improving. The school prepares you well for the challenges of adult life. What we liked most about your school:

- the good achievement and standards reached by students
- the good behaviour and strong relationships between staff and students.
- the outstanding leadership
- the high aspirations shown throughout the school community.
- the good quality teaching
- the impact of the Student Voice and Junior Leadership Team on school issues
- the variety of activities and experiences created by the business and enterprise specialism
- the opportunities to take part in many extra-curricular activities
- the outstanding pastoral and academic support you receive throughout your time at Higham Lane School.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- ensure greater consistency of marking in all subjects, so that you clearly understand how to make the important next steps in your learning
- to develop further opportunities for you to follow a curriculum that is closely tailored to your individual needs.

I am sure you will continue to play your part in making this an even better school by working closely with your teachers to improve your work and achieve as well as you can. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Victoria Godley

Lead inspector