

# Huntcliff School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118087
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339138
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 June –1 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bernard Campbell 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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	737
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Rands JP
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Bond
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Redbourne Mere Gainsborough Lincolnshire DN21 4NN
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<b>Email address</b>	admin.huntcliffcomp@northlincs.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in classes, observed 29 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 156 parents and carers, 106 students and 45 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the evidence of past and current attainment and progress, especially in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment across subjects
- the extent to which the curriculum, and the care, guidance and support, meet the diverse range of students' needs and interests
- the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in bringing about improvement.

## Information about the school

Huntcliff School is a little smaller than average. A high proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are fewer than average minority ethnic students. It is a specialist college for engineering and technology. The school has the Healthy Schools Status, the International School Award and the Silver Artsmark Award.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is average. The progress made by students has improved significantly over the last two years. In previous years, students underachieved, including in English and mathematics. In 2009, students made satisfactory progress overall, including in English and mathematics. School predictions, which were accurate in previous years, indicate a further improvement in rates of progress in 2010, and Year 11 students are on track to meet the school's ambitious targets. School data from the regular assessment of students in each year group show that students are now making good progress.

Teaching is good. In most lessons students develop their understanding and develop skills well. Their learning is guided by clear objectives. They enjoy good relationships with staff. They are motivated by the good number of active lessons which have practical activities and demonstrations. Students make less progress in the few lessons where there are shortcomings in the management of behaviour. The pattern of homework is inconsistent which limits students' scope for planning and working independently.

The curriculum is now a driving force in raising achievement for students. There is a good match of courses to students' range of abilities and aspirations. The engineering and technology specialism provides good links to employers and post-16 providers. Students' social and cultural development is limited by the lack of opportunities to engage with young people from different backgrounds in other parts of Britain or abroad.

Care, guidance and support are good. The inclusion team makes a strong contribution to the good support for students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable or underachieving students. For example, diligent work with students, staff and parents has resulted in improved attendance and reduced exclusions.

Since the last inspection leaders and managers have acted in a determined and rigorous way to improve the quality of provision and student outcomes. The underachievement of recent years has been overcome and students have made significantly improved progress over the last two years. The rigour of lesson observation has improved with a clear emphasis on the progress made by students. Although lesson observations are generally accurate, the school underestimates occasional weaknesses because it does not carry out unannounced visits to lessons. Capacity for sustained improvement is good. Senior and middle leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have clear plans to make further improvements.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve attainment and progress by ensuring that:
  - students meet their challenging targets
  - attainment rises to above the national average.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching, and ensure that:
  - the management of behaviour is consistently good
  - homework is set more consistently
  - leaders make unannounced visits to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning.
- Improve the social and cultural development of students through increased opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds in Britain and abroad.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

In 2009, attainment in science rose to above average as a result of the wider range of courses matched to the needs and abilities of students. A lower than average proportion gains a qualification in modern and foreign languages. The school has reliable evidence that attainment is likely to rise in 2010 as a result of the increased range of qualifications taken by students. In addition, early entry GCSE results in English, and school assessment, show that the school is on track to increase the proportions gaining at least a grade C in English and mathematics.

School assessments of students in Year 9 show good progress against external benchmarks in English and mathematics. Students' progress is confirmed by the observation of good learning in lessons. There has been some weakness in mathematics teaching this year but the school has acted effectively to tackle this.

The school has a detailed analysis of the progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This shows that the wide range of personalised programmes is having a good impact on their progress in gaining skills and qualifications. For example, students with dyslexia make good progress in gaining five good GCSEs. Students' needs are identified well and additional staffing and programmes are targeted effectively to provide support.

Students and their parents are confident that the school is safe. Students feel they are listened to, well supported and that issues will be dealt with effectively. On occasion, they feel that actions to tackle the few instances of bullying could be tackled more promptly. Behaviour is good and levels of exclusion have reduced. Students are polite and welcoming and conduct themselves well around the school. They are cooperative and keen to learn. On occasion, lessons are disrupted by poor behaviour when lessons are uninspiring and lack challenging activity for them to get involved in. The school has appropriate plans in place to strengthen the consistency of rewards and sanctions in the management of behaviour.

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Levels of persistent absence have been significantly reduced and attendance has risen to above average. Students develop a good range of skills such as team working, personal reflection and self-review within the curriculum. They have good opportunities for work-related learning. They develop their literacy and numeracy skills well. They have good opportunities to apply information and communication technology skills across the curriculum. Almost all continue in education, training or employment at age 16.

The take-up of school meals is good and the options at lunchtime encourage students to make healthier choices. Students enjoy 'cheerleading' and dance and a wide range of other physical activities provided through the school sports partnership. The school has a good range of opportunities for students to take on a responsibility. These include sports leaders, prefects and anti-bullying peer mentors. Students organise charitable activities in school and the local community. School council meetings are not sufficiently regular and the outcomes of the council's work and of student surveys are not communicated well enough to students.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Lesson objectives and use of assessment criteria are used well to guide lessons. Timing is used effectively to maintain an energetic pace of learning. Activities are practical and engaging, and students work well with each other and the teacher. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Explanations and questioning challenge students and increase their understanding. Interactive whiteboards are used well to present and manage the lesson but there is a limited range of on-line resources used to stimulate imagination and different learning experiences. As a result of frequent diagnostic assessments, staff and students are well informed about their progress and they receive helpful comments on what they need to do to improve. There are a few cases when teaching shows insufficiently high expectations and classroom tasks are menial, resulting in a lack of engagement or occasional misbehaviour. Teaching assistants are well deployed. They have a good knowledge of students' special needs and promote their learning well.

The curriculum provides good opportunities to study a wide range of academic and vocational courses. Courses have clear routes to further study and/or employment. In Key Stage 3, a new 'Opening Minds' course is improving students' study skills, their ability to work in teams and become more reflective learners. 'Super-learning days' enrich their normal subject options and provide good opportunities for students to develop a wide range of skills and qualities. Enrichment opportunities are extensive, particularly given the constraints of transport within a rural area. Participation in sporting clubs and theatre productions is particularly good.

The school has a thorough understanding of individual needs and acts quickly to provide care, guidance and support. The link between pastoral and academic support has been strengthened effectively. Effective assessment and monitoring of the attitudes and achievement of vulnerable or underachieving students result in prompt intervention and regular reviews of progress. Arrangements for transition both from feeder schools and onwards to post-16 are highly effective and are well supported by the information, advice and guidance given to students. Specialist technology activities are used well to create practical links with pupils and teachers at primary schools.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully communicated their ambition for higher achievement. Management procedures and practices are more rigorous and well focused. Targets are ambitious and tracking systems provide regular reports on progress

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which contributes to a common sense of endeavour. Strong systems of accountability have been established between senior and middle managers with frequent and rigorous evaluation of student progress. The evaluation of faculty performance draws on a good range of evidence, effectively highlights strengths and weaknesses and results in detailed action plans to tackle the areas for improvement. The school's homework policy is not managed consistently with the result that students sometimes have a lot of homework and sometimes too little. The school is reviewing the management of its homework policy.

Governors are committed, know the school well and are involved at many levels of school life. They receive good information on the progress being made. They effectively challenge the school about aspects of school management. They do not have a sufficiently strong role in influencing the strategic direction of the school. The school has good safeguarding policies and procedures in place. All adults are well trained. Links with external agencies make a good contribution to safeguarding and care, guidance and support. Engineering and technology partnerships have provided the school with equipment and expert advice that is up to date and relevant to the needs of local industry. The school promotes engineering and technology effectively through its partnerships with local primary schools.

The school has a generally positive relationship with parents. The parent support adviser provides good support for parents that find it difficult to engage with school.

The new text service is appreciated by parents but at present the school website is being renewed and is not available.

Equal opportunities are promoted effectively through the rigorous analysis of the performance of different groups. Students with diverse needs receive good provision in the curriculum and no groups of students underachieve. The school actively promotes understanding about diverse communities through curriculum subjects and the special learning days. Although it gained an International School award, this work stalled and there are currently no ongoing links with schools in other parts of the world. Plans to provide opportunities for active engagement with students from other cultures beyond the local community are at an early stage of development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers said they are happy with the school. They believe their children enjoy school and feel their child is safe. Most feel well informed about their child's progress. They believe their children's needs are being met and that teaching is good. The inspectors agreed with the positive views expressed by most parents. A few parents expressed concerns, in additional written comments or by telephone, about instances of unacceptable behaviour and the variability of the homework timetable. The school has recognised these issues and has plans in place to tackle them. The inspectors identified these as areas of improvement.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Huntcliff School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 156 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 737 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	24	102	65	13	8	4	3
The school keeps my child safe	42	27	100	64	11	7	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	52	33	94	60	10	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	24	96	62	17	11	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	24	15	110	71	14	9	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	13	99	63	29	19	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	13	104	67	22	14	4	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	35	22	90	58	13	8	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	22	93	60	17	11	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	23	72	46	25	16	13	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	15	89	57	27	17	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	17	93	60	19	12	10	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	29	88	56	16	10	5	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

# Glossary

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

## Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Huntcliff School, Gainsborough, DN21 4NN

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. You said that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job and that you learn a lot. You also said that there are a few shortcomings in the management of behaviour. We agreed with you and judged that yours is a good school. These were the things we liked most about your school.

- Year 11 students are on track for better GCSE results in 2010 and students are making good progress.
- Teaching is good and you enjoy most lessons because of the opportunities for practical activity.
- The wide range of courses meets your interests and enables you to achieve well.
- Those of you with particular needs get good support from staff.
- School leaders have made significant improvements in the last two years.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that senior leaders should ensure that:

-you meet your targets for making progress

- more teaching is good or outstanding
- your behaviour in lessons is always well managed
- homework is set more consistently
- they make unannounced visits to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning
- you have opportunities to engage with people from different backgrounds in Britain and abroad.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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