

Heathfield High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120241
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339647
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Frank Knowles

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	477
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jeanette Faulkner
Headteacher	Mr Graham Jones
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The team observed 26 lessons during the two days, taught by 24 teachers. Inspectors held discussions with senior staff, middle leaders, governors, members of the school council and other students, and visited Year 9 students taking part in transition lessons in William Bradford Community College. They observed the school's work, and looked at the responses to questionnaires from 69 parents and carers, 141 students and 24 staff. Inspectors also looked at a range of school policies and practices, assessment records and analysis, and the school's safeguarding procedures.

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

- the role of middle leaders in self-evaluation and in monitoring the quality of provision and outcomes in their areas
- the use of assessment data to analyse students' progress and identify, for individual students and groups, where support and intervention are needed
- the use of short-term goals and feedback to students through discussion and marking to accelerate progress and raise attainment further.

Information about the school

Heathfield High School is a smaller than average school taking students from Barwell, Earl Shilton and the surrounding rural areas. The vast majority of students come from White British backgrounds, and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals, at 14%, is close to the national average. At 23%, the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

Since the last inspection, and in conjunction with William Bradford Community College, the school has gained specialist school status in technology. It has also been redesignated an Investor in People, is a Centre of Good Practice in the Management and Development of Support Staff, and has achieved the FMSIS standard for financial management. The school has also achieved the Sports Mark and Healthy Schools and Eco School (Bronze) status.

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

Heathfield High School has improved significantly since it was last inspected. Staff share an enthusiasm to move the school forward and are working effectively to sharpen practice and raise expectations among students. Students now make good progress as a result of good teaching. This comes about mainly through more active learning and improved planning of lessons. Teachers all now provide clear learning objectives that are shared with students and are usually differentiated according to students' prior attainment. Activities often involve students in interesting paired and group activities. As a result, students enjoy their lessons, work hard and appreciate the way teachers support their learning. Students do not all have the oral skills to contribute confidently in class, however, and not all teachers encourage extended responses, the use of higher-order thinking skills, or students' taking responsibility for their own learning. Students all know their targets in every subject, and frequently reflect on their current levels of attainment to determine what they need to do to improve their work. Marking of students' work is frequent, but inconsistent in setting out clearly what improvements are needed.

The school's thorough analysis of assessment data shows that students meet or exceed their challenging targets, and that their attainment is now above average, with particular strengths in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in the school's specialist subject, technology. The support provided for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they make similar progress to that of their peers. In many subjects, 2010 has seen greatly increased numbers of students achieving higher levels at the end of Year 9. Tutors play a key role in using data to drive up standards. Assessment data are used very well to track the progress of individual students and to identify where support is needed when students are falling behind. Senior leaders do not yet aggregate this progress information regularly for different groups of students. This makes it harder to identify and share outstanding classroom practice and to target intervention at an early enough stage to bring about improvement where a group is falling behind.

Students are proud to belong to the school and their attendance is high. They value their teachers and the support they receive. Their behaviour is good, and they are polite and thoughtful when moving about the building and in class. In some classes, however, a few students make learning difficult for others, a point noted by students and by parents and carers in questionnaire responses. Inconsistencies in the application of the school's behaviour policies mean that the class's progress is sometimes reduced. More generally, students enjoy good relationships with each other and with staff, contribute much through year and school councils, and actively support the wider community

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through extensive charitable work. Transition arrangements are good, both on entry to the school and on leaving it, and especially with the community college to which nearly all students transfer. The school undertakes a number of activities to promote community cohesion, but there is currently no coherent strategic plan to drive the school's work forward in this area.

The leadership and management of the school have also improved since the last inspection, and staff are now much more involved in review and development activities. Middle leaders are taking greater responsibility for improving practice in their areas and are more involved in self-evaluation, but this is not yet consistent across all subject leaders. The school has a generally accurate view of itself, its strengths and areas for development. The governing body is now challenging the school effectively and has become more involved in self-evaluation and strategic development. Recent improvements in teaching, learning and students' progress indicate the school has good capacity to improve further. The school's plans to place greater responsibility on subject leaders to assure the quality of learning match well the need to build on existing successes and raise students' achievement further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Construct a strategic plan to promote community cohesion in the wider local and national context.
- Increase the level of rigour of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - using more open questioning and developing higher-order skills to improve students' confidence in contributing in class
 - planning more paired and group work in which students take responsibility for their own learning
 - consistently providing feedback in all marking on how students can improve their work.
- Ensure consistent implementation of behaviour management strategies across all staff.
- Develop the school's management systems to:
 - ensure consistent leadership and management across departments and hold all staff accountable through robust quality assurance systems
 - make greater use of existing assessment data to analyse the progress made by different classes, subjects and other groups of students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students' attainment has risen over the last three years and is above average. Moderated teacher assessments show increases in almost all subjects at all levels, with particularly strong improvements at the higher levels. Analysis by different groups of students shows little variation. There is also less variation than is typical between the attainment of boys and girls. The school's analysis shows that students make good

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progress from their average attainment when they join the school. This good progress is reflected in students' recorded work, which shows clear development over the school year. In lessons, students' high attendance, their readiness to engage in activities and their enthusiasm all contribute to good learning and progress. Frequent reflection on the levels at which they are working in all subjects sets an ethos of high achievement which is embraced by students and contributes significantly to their progress.

Students' personal development is good. They settle well into the school's routines and their good numeracy and literacy skills when they leave and their high levels of attendance fit them well for their future life in education and employment. This is also supported by curriculum links with North Warwickshire and Hinckley College. Students enjoy school and contribute much through year and school councils and through regular charity work, much of which involves the whole school. Student participation in sport is good, with a broad range of activities on offer. Most students have adopted healthy lifestyles and have responded well to health promotion strategies. They demonstrate safe practices, for example in science, physical education lessons and on the internet, and all but a small minority feel safe at school.

The school takes a strong line with bullying, with anti-bullying input during tutor group time and in assemblies. As a result, there is very little bullying in school, and staff generally deal with it effectively, although a few students do not agree. Of more general concern to students is behaviour in lessons, where a very few students sometime disrupt learning. While the behaviour of an overwhelming majority of students is good, teachers' inconsistent use of the school's behaviour policies with these students can occasionally slow the progress made by other students. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have very strong views of right and wrong and of what constitutes good and bad behaviour, unpinned by clear values such as fairness. Theme days, for example the one on Africa during the inspection, support students' cultural development well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2

¹ 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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Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3 well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is supplemented by a flexible weekly session that also provides support and intervention sessions where needed. The school has good links with William Bradford Community College, teaching some GCSE music in partnership, working closely with staff there in technology through the joint specialism, and providing additional challenges for gifted and talented students, for example in mathematics and art.

Teachers use the school's common planning format consistently in translating the curriculum into classroom activities. The strong focus on sharing learning objectives with students has become universal, and these are generally well thought out and differentiated to two or three levels in each lesson. The school's good teaching typically features well-structured lessons, with end-of-lesson reviews built in and used effectively to assess what has been learned. Teachers' questioning is not always open enough, however, and students are generally not confident enough orally to support classroom debate at a high level. The school's other strong focus on students knowing their levels of attainment and what they need to do to achieve their targets is also universal and helps shape teaching and assessment. In some subjects such as music, students set short-term goals for their next steps in learning, and evaluate subsequently whether or not they have reached them. Marking of students' work is inconsistent, however, in setting out clearly what improvements are needed. Students are fully involved in peer assessment in some subjects, such as physical education, where good questioning helps them develop a thoughtful, reasoned statement of their views. This is most effective where students have clear criteria for evaluation. Teachers manage the pace of learning well and use interactive whiteboards effectively. Learning sometimes relies too heavily on teacher direction, however, with too few opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning or to make extended contributions. Resources are generally of good quality, although worksheets approaches tend to be less demanding than other activities. They sometimes do not extend students' higher-order thinking skills, a necessary next step in accelerating learning further. Teaching assistants support learning well, focusing strongly on the lesson content.

The school formally records assessments four times a year using on-line software and

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this enables the school to build up a clear picture of each student's attainment and their progress towards their targets. Students are very familiar with the red, amber and green (RAG) coding used and value the way this helps them make faster progress. Mentors' regular reviews of students' progress enable targets to be set jointly and appropriate support and intervention strategies to be provided. The school's support strategies for students with special educational needs, particularly in English and mathematics, are effective in accelerating progress. The link between attendance and achievement is reinforced very well by a member of staff who liaises with families, particularly those that are hard to reach, to maximise attendance and progress. Transition from primary school is effective, with shared data and familiarisation visits. Transition to Year 10 in other schools is very good, with joint activities and, in the case of William Bradford Community College, a two-week experience of Year 10 lessons towards the end of Year 9. Students in Year 8 also have a taster experience at North Warwickshire and Hinckley College to help them make option choices for Year 10. The school provides good support for its most vulnerable students. The school's own inclusion centre, where students continue working when they would otherwise disrupt the learning of others, makes a good contribution to the work of the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders have driven a range of developments in the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Teaching and learning are better, although there is more to do to sharpen practice further. The school's tracking of students' attainment and progress has improved since the last inspection and is good. Staff at all levels are involved in change within a culture of improvement and sharing of practice. Subject leaders feel empowered to develop teaching and learning in their areas. Their increased responsibility for subject improvement goes hand in hand with increased accountability. These changes mean that both provision and outcomes are good, demonstrating the school's good capacity for further improvement. The leadership of teaching and learning is good, and involves the analysis of data and classroom observations to identify where improvement is needed, and coaching to provide support.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are well-organised and taken very seriously by governors and staff, both for students' day-to-day safety and with thorough security checks on visitors. A few minor site issues were discussed with the school for its

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attention. The governing body has become more effective in evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement and contributing to its strategic direction. It has managed a difficult budget situation relating to reduced student numbers very professionally and, although the school has an agreed deficit, there is a clear plan for recovery. Despite these difficulties, the school's improved performance shows that, overall, it is deploying its resources well and providing good value for money.

The school has good links with other schools locally and abroad. As well as strong staff links with primary schools, peer mentors and sports leaders visit them to support transition and sports events. Links with a local special school support provision for a small number of students with special educational needs. Transition arrangements to William Bradford Community College are particularly strong. The school takes a very strong line on equality and tackling discrimination of any kind, including the use of theme days and assemblies. Procedures for dealing with the very small number of racist incidents are thorough. The school is working in a number of areas to promote community cohesion, including an international perspective, but this has not yet been developed into a coherent strategic plan to focus on the wider local and national community. The school's good work on transition provides a model for approaching this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers expressed their support for the school in their responses to the questionnaire. Very few parents commented adversely, and some of

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these comments focused on how their individual concerns were dealt with inflexibly by the school at some point in the past. The school was made aware of this general point for future reference. However, the most common theme in parents' and carers' responses relates to concerns about the way behaviour is not always managed effectively and the impact of this on other students' learning. This theme was also echoed by students in discussion and through their questionnaire, and inspectors spent some time exploring the school's responses to disruptive behaviour in lessons. Inconsistencies in application of the school's behaviour policies were identified as an issue and this is the focus of an area for improvement elsewhere in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Heathfield High 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 477 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	26	45	65	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	21	30	41	59	4	6	2	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	28	44	64	4	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	33	42	61	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	21	30	43	62	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	23	40	58	10	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	22	45	65	8	12	0	0
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)	19	28	40	58	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	33	40	58	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	35	51	7	10	5	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	17	43	62	4	6	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	17	25	45	65	4	6	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	36	36	52	5	7	1	1

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Heathfield High School, Earl Shilton, LE9 7PA

Thank you for your welcome and for your positive contribution to the school's recent inspection. We appreciated the open way in which you spoke with us and the friendly way in which you greeted us around the school. We found your views very helpful in coming to conclusions about the school. We were particularly impressed with the way you were all able to talk about your target levels and what you needed to do to help you reach them.

Our overall view is that Heathfield is good school. This is because:

- standards are above average and you make good progress
- the curriculum and teaching are good
- nearly all of you have very high levels of attendance, which links with your good progress, and you enjoy coming to school
- your behaviour is good, with very little bullying, and you have good relationship with each other and with staff
- the school's RAG tracking system is a very good way of helping you keep track of your progress
- the school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff.

Even good schools can be improved further, and we have asked the headteacher and staff to follow up four areas:

- plan more effectively for the school's involvement with the diverse communities in the broad area around the school
- make teaching even better by including activities that make you think more deeply about your work and help you make a greater input into lessons
- be more consistent in the way they deal with the small amount of disruptive behaviour in lessons
- develop the work of subject leaders to focus more on improvement and make more use of the school's assessment data to help them.

For your part, you can support the school's improvement by continuing to work enthusiastically in lessons and contributing your views confidently. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Knowles

Lead inspector

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