

St Hugh's CofE Mathematics and Computing College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120718
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	339761
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	532
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Fox
Headteacher	Mrs Trudy Brothwell
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time observing learning, including looking at 30 teachers and 31 lessons. They observed the school's work, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They also looked at the school improvement plan, the school's records of the monitoring of teaching, departmental files and 81 parental questionnaires.

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

- current progress in English and science
- the impact of the curriculum, particularly the opportunities for vocational education
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation and the quality of development planning
- the effect of specialist status on the school's performance.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than average though it is becoming increasingly popular as a first choice for parents. The school is comprehensive but it is in an area where there is selective education. There are more boys than girls because of a nearby girl's school. An increasing number of pupils come from Eastern European backgrounds and some arrive unable to speak English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational need. The school has specialist mathematics and computing status. It is in a hard federation with The Charles Read High School, The Earl of Dysart Primary School and Spitalgate Church of England Primary School. Governance is under the auspices of the federation governing body.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Hugh's is an outstanding school where leaders and managers relentlessly pursue an agenda for improvement. It has gone from strength to strength in recent years, improving many areas of its work

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is impressive. They learn to be very good citizens and to deal sensibly with the difficult decisions they face in every day life. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and give pupils a great deal of self-belief. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the local community, developing a real sense of responsibility for themselves, for the school and the locality. When pupils join the school in Year 7, their attainment is low. Pupils achieve well and all groups of pupils make good progress so that by the time they leave school, their attainment is average. Although the school has made huge improvements to rates of pupils' progress in many subjects, including English and mathematics, progress in science has not accelerated at the same rate. The school is now providing a more suitable science curriculum for older pupils but some pupils in Key Stage 3 are continuing to make relatively unhurried progress in science.

Although teaching is good overall, it varies between outstanding and just satisfactory. In the small number of satisfactory lessons, adult support is not always effectively deployed and the work set is not always finely matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. One of the key factors in the success of the school is the pioneering curriculum. Pupils can study a whole host of vocational qualifications and this really motivates them. Subjects that vary from engineering to fishing appeal to boys and keep them on board and enthusiastic while there are also courses available such as hair and beauty and horse care. Not only do pupils have access to an outstanding curriculum, they also benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support. This means that many pupils attain standards that they would not otherwise be able to. Pupils are very well known to staff and are valued as individuals. In Year 11, pupils receive individual support and guidance of an excellent quality which ensures that they access courses in further education that are carefully matched to their individual requirements. Consequently, a high proportion of pupils sustain their involvement in education after they leave school.

The executive headteacher provides exceptionally strong leadership and successfully shares her drive and determination with an able senior leadership team. Within the school, there is a shared vision and a remarkably clear sense of direction that focuses exceptionally well on driving up standards and providing a high quality education for every pupil. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because systems for monitoring performance are rigorous. It has well-laid plans for

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future development. All this underpins the pursuit of very ambitious targets which are not only met but often exceeded, demonstrating the school's outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the improvements made to attainment and pupils' progress in science by paying particular attention to progress in Key Stage 3.
- Address the minor inconsistencies in the quality of teaching by:
 - fine-tuning the way work is matched to pupils' different abilities
 - making sure that classroom assistants are always effectively deployed.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is improving at a very good rate. For example, in 2009, 78 percent of pupils gained five A* to C grades at GCSE which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who gain GCSEs in English and mathematics is also rapidly improving. In the current Year 11, a significant number of pupils have already gained their GCSE in English and mathematics and this is boosting their confidence in their own abilities and strengthening their determination to succeed in other subject areas. The school's specialist status is evident in the way that pupils are able to transfer and practise their mathematical skills in other subjects such as engineering.

The quality of pupils' learning, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English, is good. Pupils are committed to their work and most are able to work well independently. They enjoy learning and achieve well because teaching is engaging and the curriculum has been very carefully designed with their needs in mind. Plentiful opportunities to work in groups in lessons means that pupils learn to cooperate very well. Moral guidance is strong. Pupils say that staff are quick to respond to and deal with any incidents of unacceptable behaviour and, as a result, pupils feel safe and secure in school. Pupils have a good awareness of how to keep healthy and try hard to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Pupils respond extremely well to the numerous opportunities to contribute to the school and the local community. For example, whilst acting as ambassadors for sport, they have produced a very high quality video which celebrates the excellent work of the physical education department. When it was shown in assembly it captured the imagination of both pupils and staff. Although pupils' basic skills are only average, they are well prepared for future success because they have a very clear view of future career pathways and a strong sense of vocation. Attendance is average, and levels of persistent absence have fallen.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge which they share well with their pupils. Behaviour is usually managed very effectively. As a result of the school's computing status, many teachers use information communication technology (ICT) well to enhance the quality of teaching. For example, in music lessons videos are made of pupils' performances so they can be analysed and evaluated later. Most teachers are very good at checking pupils' learning and pupils often have the opportunity to check their work and the work of others. Consequently, they usually know exactly how to improve their work. Teachers' planning is often very comprehensive. Pupils with additional learning needs are almost always identified on the planning but occasionally it is not made crystal clear how they are to be catered for or how classroom assistants are to be deployed. As a result, the work provided is not always finely matched to the needs of those who find learning difficult and the impact of the work of classroom assistants is reduced.

While the school itself provides an excellent curriculum, it also works very effectively with others, including providers of further and higher education, to ensure that pupils have access to courses that are extremely well-matched to their needs and interests. For example, they are able access apprenticeships and a wide range of college courses. The outstanding curriculum is central to ensuring that pupils enjoy school and want to attend regularly. It is further enhanced by a broad range of enrichment activities. While sports activities are extremely popular, so are the many sessions that focus on course work and catching up with skills, including the opportunities to study in school holidays. Much is done to encourage pupil's cultural dimension and foster a sense of belonging to

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a European community.

The school provides an extremely welcoming and high quality learning environment. The inclusion of potentially vulnerable Year 7 pupils in foundation groups who benefit from having a base and a class teacher helps them to feel safe and secure and get off to a good start in secondary school. An exceptionally strong focus on removing barriers to learning, including providing valuable mentoring, means that all can achieve well. Early diagnosis of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, together with a good range of strategies to help them catch up academically and to improve their personal qualities, ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress. Those at the early stages of learning English are also very well supported. Sporadically, the excellent work of those with specific briefs regarding supporting pupils with additional needs is not fully reflected in the practice of class teachers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching 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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Throughout the school, there is a very strong sense of purpose and a whole-hearted commitment to achieving ambitious targets and providing equal opportunities for all groups of pupils. Staff are quick to challenge discrimination and pupils from all backgrounds are warmly welcomed into school. The executive headteacher is exceptionally adept at matching the experience and skills of managers to the requirements of their role. Consequently, the senior leaders are a formidable team who are able to drive improvement very effectively. The school is successfully using the federation as an opportunity to extend the experiences of staff and to further develop the already strong management skills that exist within this school. Local and national partnerships bring innovative practice to the school that directly benefits the pupils. Senior leaders are working well to develop the skills of teachers. Their judgements are clear and precise. As a result, professional development is carefully tailored to individual needs. Others, including subject leaders, also monitor teaching and teachers have regular opportunities to observe each other including looking at lessons in other departments. Whilst all this is good practice, occasionally the judgements that are formed about the quality of teaching are too high because there has been limited consideration of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibility well. Together with school staff, governors ensure that safeguarding procedures are at the heart of the school's

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work. Much is done to ensure that pupils are not exposed to risk and to ensure that pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported. Governors are now becoming more comfortable with their new roles as governors of a federation and are becoming increasingly well equipped to challenge the school. The school's specialist status is being used extremely well, particularly in the way that the school reaches out to the local community and helps to ensure that the promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. For example, not only is the school working with older people to improve their access to the internet and to challenge rural isolation, it also provides ICT support for those of Portuguese heritage. International links are also very strong, for example, some pupils have been able to have the valuable experience of spending some time living abroad. As a result, pupils know their place in the world.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents are very happy with what the school provides. Many say it is a 'fantastic school' pointing to 'the brilliant teachers, mentors and leaders and managers'. The school makes strenuous efforts to ensure that pupils understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, but parents are correct to point out that healthy food can run out in the canteen leaving latecomers limited choices. The school provides regular and clear information to parents about their children's progress and regular interviews in Year 11 make it very clear to parents how they can help and support their child.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hugh's CofE Mathematics and Computing College 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 532 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	33	48	60	4	5	2	3
The school keeps my child safe	23	29	54	68	3	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	40	43	54	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	36	42	53	8	10	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	31	53	66	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	19	51	64	12	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	20	50	63	11	14	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)	22	28	53	66	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	25	54	68	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	26	49	62	7	9	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	23	44	56	6	8	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	32	41	40	51	5	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	48	35	44	4	5	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



10 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hugh's CofE Mathematics and Computing College, Grantham, NG31 7PX

Thank you for making us so welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It is clear that the school has improved substantially over recent years because of outstanding leadership and management and is now providing you with an outstanding quality of education. You are making good progress not only because of good teaching but because of an outstanding curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support. Attainment is improving year on year and is now broadly average. An increasing number of you are passing your English and mathematics examinations early. Inspectors were pleased that you are now studying for a more suitable science examination in Key Stage 4 but noticed that more needs to be done to improve your progress in science at Key Stage 3.

Although teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, there are a small number of lessons where improvements could be made. In these lessons, work is not always finely matched to the needs of those of you who are finding learning challenging and teaching assistants are sometimes unsure about how they could support your learning.

You have access to a wonderful range of courses that are very closely matched to your needs and aspirations and you told us that you are very well supported. You receive particularly good guidance about your future career pathways and encouragement to stay engaged in education. We were very impressed with the way pupils work tirelessly for the good of the school and the local community. There are so many examples of this valuable work that I cannot possibly name them all but well done to everyone involved for this hard work and commitment. Without you, your school could not make such an outstanding contribution to your local community.

Yours sincerely

Susan Walsh

Lead inspector

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