

Holyrood Community School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123870 |
| Local Authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 340448 |
| Inspection dates | 3–4 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | John Seal HMI |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Gender of pupils in the sixth form | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 1237 |
| Of which, number on roll in the sixth form | 161 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Gary Andrews |
| Headteacher | Mr Maurice Hicks |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 January 2007 |
| School address | Zembard Lane Chard Somerset TA20 1JL |
| Telephone number | 01460 260100 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Between them, inspectors spent just under half the inspection time looking at learning. Inspectors observed 40 lessons which involved seeing 38 teachers. They observed the school's work and looked at: pupils' progress data; a range of policies and minutes of meetings; school self-evaluation documents; risk assessments; financial information; and the single central record of safeguarding checks on staff. The inspection team analysed questionnaires that were returned by 354 parents and carers, 119 students and 93 members of staff.

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

- the rate of progress that all groups of pupils are making in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form
- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation in identifying its outstanding features
- how well leaders and managers are ensuring that any students at risk of underachieving are provided with appropriate support to catch-up.

Information about the school

Holyrood Community School is larger than the average secondary school and has specialist status for technology. A very large proportion of students are of White British origin, and a very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Their needs include specific learning, severe learning and speech, language and communication difficulties.

The school holds a number of awards which include Investors in People and Healthy Schools, and the Financial Management Standard in Schools accreditation.

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

Holyrood is an outstanding school where each individual student is cared for in an exemplary manner. Students' attainment when they join is below average, but outstanding teaching across Years 7 to 11 has ensured that they make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science over their time in the main school, and also do particularly well in the specialist subject of information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, there has been a rapid and sustained increase in its GCSE results over the last three years, with a majority being significantly above the levels expected nationally. Some exemplary teaching practice is also seen in the sixth form, but inconsistent lesson quality results in variations in students' progress. Consequently, the overall outcomes for the sixth form are satisfactory, although it is led and managed well with good pastoral care. As a consequence of the students' outstanding progress in the main school and satisfactory progress in the sixth form, students make good progress overall. The good curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is well structured, flexible and effectively meets the needs of all students.

The school has many outstanding features, which include:

- the promotion of students' awareness of safety
- supporting students to learn to live a healthier life
- preparing students for the world of work and further and higher learning
- students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. He is supported by an exemplary leadership team who have an equally thorough and analytical approach to ensuring that all students are given a high-quality education. All aspects of the school's strengths and weakness are known, targeted and addressed robustly. This strong strategic approach to improvement rightly identified the need to drive and embed improvements throughout the main school. Consequently, the school has made sustained improvements over time, with especially rapid progress since the last inspection in 2007. The searchlight of improvement has now been focused on the sixth form, where improvements can already be seen to have been made. The excellent governing body holds the school to account in an exceptionally challenging manner and is aware in detail of what the school needs to do next to improve. The school's implementation of safeguarding procedures is exceedingly robust, meticulous and efficient. Its self-evaluation rightly identifies that, although outstanding programmes are in place to support students' cultural development and awareness of the school and global community, not enough has been done to fully develop students' awareness of the wide and diverse communities throughout Great Britain.

The high level of detail and thoroughness in the school's self-evaluation and outstanding

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leadership and management at nearly every level provide the school with exceptional capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in the sixth form to ensure that all students make good progress in all subjects.
- Improve community cohesion by improving students' awareness and understanding of the range of different and diverse communities within Great Britain.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

All groups of students were seen to be learning consistently well in Key Stages 3 and 4, and as a result, the standards observed in lessons and students' books were above average for the older year groups. The high number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those whose English is at an early stage of development and looked-after children do well due to the exceptional care and attention paid to their social and emotional needs alongside their learning.

From low starting points, students make consistent and sustained progress throughout their time in Key Stages 3 and 4 in lessons because the teaching is outstanding.

Students have very positive attitudes towards learning and work well both in groups or as individuals. Students' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are polite, courteous and relate well to one another. The very few examples of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with well by staff. Students are kept very safe. They feel very well cared for, knowing that any of the very few instances of bullying will be dealt with promptly.

Students are extremely aware of how to live healthy lifestyles and there is a very high take-up of extra-curricular sports activities. Students' involvement in the healthy schools committee is impressive. Most students have a very mature attitude to using the health centre as needed and eat healthy, nutritious meals at lunchtimes.

Students have an extremely strong sense of right and wrong; they tolerate differences exceptionally well, and work and socialise very well together. Their strong cultural awareness is developed well in music and art, and their multicultural awareness through strong links with India and in subjects such as religious education, music, art, history and geography.

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 | 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 | 1 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

Lesson plans have a very high level of consistency which ensures learning activities are well structured, and based firmly on students' previous learning. Information about students' learning is used exceptionally well to ensure targets set for progress are accurate and built in to lesson introductions and discussions with students. There are a range of interesting and practical opportunities for students to discuss their learning with each other. In the very best examples, students lead learning and are involved in evaluating how much progress they have made and what they need to do next.

The school has strong provision for additional programmes which effectively improve students' literacy and numeracy skills. ICT is a strength of the school because of the impact of the school's technology status. The way these basic skills are taught within most, though not all, subjects contributes much to students' excellent preparation for their future economic well-being. In addition, the school is rightly proud of the 'learning to learn' and 'preparation for working life' programmes, which have a very positive impact. The very inclusive nature of the school enhances opportunities for students at risk of exclusion and vulnerable groups through learning bases which support them very well. Work-related learning is well organised and the school's very effective links with other further education providers and agencies enable the school to place students on well-matched courses, including an expanded range of vocational courses. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. For example, sports activities are extensive and a large variety of performing arts are thoroughly enjoyed by students. Study trips to venues in both this country and abroad are a regular feature in all year groups.

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Everyone in the school is treated with trust and respect. All staff demonstrate high levels of care and concern for every student. Students in vulnerable circumstances are nurtured very well and staff are exceptionally skilled in ensuring resources and activities match students' needs. There is excellent provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities through specialist support. Early intervention work across the year groups is exemplary with strong links to external agencies such as specialised therapists. The school's procedures for encouraging good attendance are excellent and the outstanding transition arrangements ensure that new students settle in quickly from the various primary schools. Careers guidance and information are excellent, resulting in students being able to make informed choices.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 1 |
| | 1 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

As a result of the headteacher's vision, clarity and attention to detail, leaders at all levels focus on developing, sustaining and promoting high quality, creative learning and assessment opportunities for all groups of learners. A key strength of the school is the detailed tracking systems which are in place for every student. These alert the school early on if any student's progress begins to slow down, so that effective intervention programmes can be quickly put in place. Governors are provided with detailed information about all aspects of the school's performance. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are exemplary and carry out their other statutory duties exceptionally well. They are very keen to ensure that the school is held to account for all its areas for development. Strong partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies ensures that students are very well supported in both their personal development and learning. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It is particularly good within the school and there are some great strengths at local and international levels, but the national dimension is relatively limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|---|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 1 |
| | 1 |

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| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 1 |

Sixth form

Overall, the sixth form's effectiveness is satisfactory but there are many signs of improvement. There is a mixed picture in terms of students' progress between different courses. Overall, students make satisfactory progress and achieve broadly satisfactory results. The school is aware of this, and has recently been focusing its attention on the variable quality of teaching. As a result, there is an increasing number of lessons where teaching is good or outstanding, but outcomes have not yet caught up. The small numbers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress which is similar to that of their peers. The majority of students make a good contribution to the school and wider community. They are particularly keen to support the younger students and act as ambassadors for academic achievement and healthy living.

The sixth form's key strengths include:

- excellent personal and social development and preparation for life beyond school - for example, students say they feel really safe and get high quality help on safety aspects such as sex and relationships and substance abuse
- students' good behaviour and very positive attitudes to their learning
- a good, flexible curriculum which is well matched to a wide range of students' needs and enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, drama and music
- good leaders and managers who are quickly coming to grips with necessary improvements in teaching and learning.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 3 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Very many of the parents' and carers' questionnaire responses were highly positive and supportive of the school's work. Nonetheless, a small minority raised concerns regarding the school's support for helping their child's learning; supporting healthy lifestyles; dealing with unacceptable behaviour; and taking views of parents and carers into account. With regard to supporting students' learning, inspectors noted the detailed tracking and feedback systems across the school which are used well to support progress and information to parents and carers. The school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is exemplary but, even with the knowledge of what food is healthiest to eat, and that exercise helps fitness, a very small number of students choose to eat less healthy food and not take part in regular exercise. The inspection team found that, although on a few occasions the behaviour of a small number of students needed to be managed carefully, on the whole students behaved well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holyrood Community 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 354 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1237 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 111 | 31 | 212 | 60 | 23 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 127 | 36 | 205 | 58 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 142 | 40 | 191 | 54 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 130 | 37 | 195 | 55 | 21 | 6 | 2 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 108 | 31 | 223 | 63 | 15 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 94 | 27 | 208 | 59 | 41 | 12 | 4 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 75 | 21 | 233 | 66 | 35 | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| 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) | 112 | 32 | 201 | 57 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 108 | 31 | 213 | 60 | 20 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 87 | 25 | 199 | 56 | 42 | 12 | 11 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 73 | 21 | 212 | 60 | 31 | 9 | 8 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 116 | 33 | 207 | 58 | 15 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 145 | 41 | 185 | 52 | 14 | 4 | 7 | 2 |

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.



5 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Holyrood Community School, Chard, TA20 1JL

Thank you for your friendly and polite welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a real pleasure seeing you in lessons, meetings and taking part in school life. Your views helped us in coming to our judgements.

Your headteacher, governors and staff judged your school to be outstanding and the inspection team agrees. There are very many things your school does very well indeed, and only a few which need more work. Some of the things the school does particularly well are:

- helping so many of you learn as much as possible
- supporting you to achieve well in many of your GCSE exams
- providing you with many excellent lessons
- caring for you and looking after you really well
- giving you feedback on how to do even better, as a result of your headteacher and his leadership team following your progress in learning very closely.

After discussing the outcomes of the inspection with you headteacher, staff and governors, here are the very few areas they will be working on in the future:

- supporting the older students in the sixth form to make even better progress in more of the courses they study
- devising ways to introduce you to the people of many different cultures and faiths that live in this country.

We all hope that you continue to work and play hard and enjoy your school life.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Seal

Her Majesty's Inspector

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