

Hounslow School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116434
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	326394
Inspection dates	8-9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela Corbett HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11-16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Double
Headteacher	Miss D Nightingale
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
School address	Jacobs Gutter Lane Totton SO40 9FT
Telephone number	02380 862981
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hounslow is a large 11-16 secondary school near Southampton serving the urban area of Totton and fourteen New Forest villages. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage. There is a very small number of pupils from Asian, Chinese and mixed race heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also very low; around three quarters of these have identified behavioural, emotional and social needs. The school gained specialist status in Science in 2003 and redesignation in 2007. The school has High Performing Specialist Status (HPSS) and from April 2008 is a designated Leadership Partner School. Silver Award Status in the National Eco-Schools award programme, Enhanced Healthy Schools and Investors in People (IIP) awards have also been achieved.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hounslow is an outstanding school. Learning and success are at the heart of this very inclusive school that puts the needs of all of its pupils first. As a result, they attain excellence in terms of both their academic achievement and their personal development. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of this oversubscribed school and it deservedly enjoys an excellent reputation in the community. One parent's comment exemplified Hounslow. 'The school provides opportunities for all the pupils to achieve in curricular and extracurricular activities through a committed team of staff, at all levels.'

The percentage of pupils achieving five and more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, have been consistently high. All pupils gain at least five A* to G GCSE grades and over a quarter of pupils achieve at A to A* level. These are all well above the national averages and show the excellent progress made by all pupils. Nevertheless, the school is not complacent and leadership at all levels work steadfastly to secure further improvement.

Outstanding teaching fully engages and enthuses pupils. Pupils know and use their challenging targets extremely well. They respond exceptionally well to the effective guidance on how to improve and appreciate the support that is provided that significantly contributes to their excellent progress. The curriculum is outstanding because it is innovative and varied. Pupils understand the benefits of the additional opportunities offered by the two-year Key Stage 3 curriculum that helps them to focus their learning and participate in a range of enrichment opportunities. For example, the New Forest Science project in which Year 9 pupils plan and lead lessons for their peers. Such experiences have motivated pupils and, by the end of Key Stage 4, significantly contribute to further improvements in their achievement.

Pupils' enjoyment shines through both within lessons and in the extensive range of extracurricular activities, events, trips and projects. Creativity is very effectively fostered, for example, in 2008 the 'BizzBazz' project enabled pupils to work with artists to create sculptures in metal that were then put on exhibition in Southampton.

Behaviour both in lessons and around school is excellent and pupils are courteous towards each other, staff and visitors. They feel very safe in school because they receive extremely high standards of care and support through the excellent pastoral system. Pupils understand healthy living very well. The excellent citizenship programme contributes well to their personal development.

The school and pupils make a strong positive contribution to the local community. Now, through its status as a Leadership Partner School, the school is increasingly providing excellent training opportunities for leaders at all levels both from within and other schools. Pupils are also given very good opportunities to take on responsibility and develop leadership skills. In particular, through the popular peer mentoring schemes, prefect and house systems. Together with positive approaches to learning, good information and communication technology (ICT) skills and excellent achievement in mathematics and English pupils are very well prepared for employment or further education. The development of community cohesion is already well embedded into the school both within and beyond the school through an exceptional number of community links and activities. However, pupils' understanding of national and global communities and the school's evaluation of the impact of its overall provision for community cohesion has yet to be fully developed.

Specialist Science College status is central to the life of the school and makes a significant impact on pupil outcomes and enjoyment. The science department's provision is outstanding. Some pupils are able to take and gain high grades in up to five science GCSEs. Very good links with other curriculum areas enhance key skills such as numeracy, analysis and evaluation. The Eco School Project is a major focus. This has enabled many pupils and staff to work in both school and the community on topics ranging from traditional gardening methods to reviewing 'food miles' and New Forest products.

The headteacher and senior team have continued to strive for excellence since the last inspection. Their outstanding leadership over the last three years has ensured that significant progress has been made, particularly in relation to raising achievement for the most able, improving the quality of teaching and learning and in developing leadership at all levels. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' understanding of national and global communities and evaluate the overall impact of the school's actions in promoting community cohesion.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter the school with prior attainment that is just above the national average and they make excellent progress. Standards by the end of Year 11 have been consistently high and well above national levels over the past five years. In 2008, the percentage of pupils leaving the school with five or more A* to C including English and mathematics was again well above the national level and significantly exceeded the local authority and specialist college status challenging targets. Even though standards are high the attainment of pupils has nevertheless risen year on year. Pupils take their end of Year 9 national tests a year early but still attain standards that are above national levels. All pupils leave school with at least five A* to G GCSE grades. This demonstrates the high level of inclusion within the school and the personalised relevant curriculum they follow.

Pupils' achievement throughout both key stages has also been outstanding over the past few years, and unvalidated data again indicates this to be the case in 2008. The accurate and detailed school tracking of data together with inspection observations demonstrates that standards and achievement have improved further for the current Year 11 pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with behavioural, emotional and social needs, also make excellent progress and consistently exceed their personal targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils develop excellent social skills, self-confidence and leadership qualities. They are thoughtful and supportive of each other, and proud of their school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall are outstanding and they are able to reflect upon events and moral issues and express their thoughts and feelings well. Behaviour is excellent and significantly contributes to the consistently very high levels of progress made by pupils. Bullying is rare and is dealt with effectively once made known to a member of staff. Attendance is well above the national average and rigorous procedures have led to a consistent improvement, in particular through strong partnerships with parents and external agencies. One Year 8 parent wrote 'My

child was never keen to go to school - this was until joining Hounslow where she is settled, happy and enjoys attending'. Older pupils provide impressive role models as mentors and are actively involved in supporting younger pupils and those who are vulnerable. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community; they take on a range of responsibilities such as school councillors or prefects. One pupil asserted that 'everyone has an opportunity to make a difference'. Pupils respond very well to the school's encouragement to adopt healthy lifestyles, for example, by taking regular exercise and eating a balanced diet. Pupils are very well prepared for their future and economic well-being, for example, Year 10 tutor groups compete for charity in promoting Valentine Ventures, a business group project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Outstanding teaching and learning is characterised by confident teaching, excellent subject knowledge, extremely good relationships between teachers and pupils and a clear focus on achieving challenging academic targets. As a result, pupils make exceptionally good progress. A Year 7 pupil enthused that he had made '110% progress' since joining Hounslow School. Work is assessed thoroughly and marking is shared with pupils to ensure that they are fully involved in understanding what they are doing well and how to do better.

Teaching is carefully adapted to meet the needs of all learners. More able pupils are encouraged to present their work in creative ways such as producing a comparison between two eco-systems in the form of a mobile display. Pupils spoke very positively about the impact of such activities and their learning gains, one Year 8 pupil wrote, 'I enjoy it when teachers think of different ways of teaching to make it memorable and fun'. Pupils with learning difficulties are given very good access to the curriculum through excellent guidance and support provided by learning support assistants. There is a culture of constant refinement in the way pupils are taught. Pupils' views are taken into consideration when making improvements such as changes within subject teaching or the resources used, for example, in technology, music and ICT. Systematic and accurate monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning provides very good focus for highly effective training in classroom practices and consistency across all areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's outstanding curriculum is innovative, varied, and particularly enhanced by opportunities offered through Science College Status. It is frequently reviewed and refined so that it consistently meets all pupils' needs and interests. Cross-curricular work, a wide range of trips, the excellent Citizenship programme, numerous opportunities to develop leadership skills and contribute to the community all further enhance pupils' experiences and their outstanding personal development. For example, a recent Citizenship Day provided an impressive range of themes including anti-bullying for Year 8, democracy for Year 9 and drugs education for Year 10. Key Stage 3 is completed by the end of Year 8.

The time gained in Year 9 is fully exploited to motivate pupils and develop their skills and knowledge through personalised experiences. As a result, they make rapid progress and many are able to tackle work normally associated with later stages in education or achieve additional qualifications, regardless of ability. For example, Critical Thinking AS or separate sciences for the more able, Free Standing Mathematics Qualifications at different ability levels and sports

leadership awards for all pupils in Year 10. Links with local schools, colleges and organisations such as The Skills Centre provide good access to vocational courses such as Building Studies and Hair and Beauty. Outside of lessons, pupils participate enthusiastically in an extremely wide range of activities in lunchtime and after-school clubs that include sport, music, art and study support activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is outstanding and a welcoming friendly ethos has always been a high priority. Parents and pupils recognise this. Risk assessment and safeguarding procedures are extremely secure and regularly reviewed. The school provides exceptionally well for vulnerable pupils who become happy and settled at school and make outstanding progress. Academic guidance is outstanding. The tracking and reviewing of pupils' progress is implemented through an excellent and well-established effective centralised data system that is consistently used by all curriculum areas. This is a major factor in the outstanding progress made by pupils. Pupils who are underachieving are identified early, offered additional mentoring and effective support so they too make excellent progress. Similarly, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also well cared for and supported.

Very effective close links with local primary schools ensure that new pupils settle quickly and happily into Year 7 participating in lessons with enthusiasm and confidence. Parents of Year 7 pupils commented very positively on this. One imaginative approach is the video especially prepared for Year 6 primary children in which Year 10 pupils answer their questions and fears of joining a large secondary by actual examples filmed in school. Extensive information and informed guidance is provided with regard to possible careers. As a result, almost all proceed into employment or further education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

There has been a relentless focus on raising achievement that has been successful in improving this already high performing school. The headteacher, supported by an associate headteacher and extremely able senior team, is excellent and provides total clarity of direction and purpose, which is exemplary. Recent changes in the senior leadership team have both increased capacity and provided a very effective platform for sustaining even further improvement. Managers at all levels are fully involved and as a result have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their zeal leaves no room for complacency, there is a clear cycle of reflection and refinement of plans at all levels to ensure continued improvement. The quality of teaching and learning has improved because of rigorous monitoring and clear focus on teacher development based on very high expectations. Excellent links exist with the local community and partner schools and these particularly enhance pupils' experiences and personal development. As a Leadership Partner School, the school is working to create and support senior and middle leadership development programmes both locally and across Hampshire. This is further enhanced by links with the National College for School Leadership. The school is very well served by its governing body, who take a keen interest in their role as governors and the work of the school. As a result, they have excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development as well as providing both highly effective challenge and support.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being**Annex A**

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hounslow School, Totton, SO40 9FT

On behalf of your inspectors, I would like to let you know that we enjoyed the time we spent with you on our recent visit. We would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us in meetings, lessons and around the school. We think that Hounslow School is an outstanding school.

We hope that you will take the time to read the full report but I have highlighted the key points below.

- Your school provides you with an excellent quality of education, enabling you all to progress well and achieve outstanding examination results in Year 11.
- You receive high quality teaching and you engage in this with enthusiasm leading to very high levels of learning.
- There is a wide range of experiences on offer to you, both inside and outside the classroom, particularly in relation to science, the arts and sport.
- The staff work hard to support and guide all of you and especially if you have particular difficulties at any time.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and the relationships between yourselves and with your teachers are excellent.
- You develop into confident young people, ready to take on responsibilities and make an outstanding contribution to school life and your local community.
- The leadership of the school and in particular that of your headteacher and her senior leadership group is outstanding.

Hounslow School continually strives for excellence and to improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- extend your understanding of national and global communities and evaluate the overall impact of the school's actions in promoting community cohesion.

You have a school you can be proud of and I am sure that you will continue to make the most of the opportunities offered to you both in and out of lessons by the school. The inspectors wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Angela Corbett

Her Majesty's Inspector