

Hagley Catholic High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116994
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	379340
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
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	1055
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Yates
Headteacher	Terence Hammond
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Brake Lane Hagley DY8 2XL
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 40 lessons taught by 40 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding and communications with parents and carers. They analysed questionnaires returned from 389 parents and carers, from staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is there sufficient evidence to support the school's view that progress is outstanding?
- To what extent does the school's provision meet the needs of all groups of students, particularly girls and lower-attaining students?
- Is the school sufficiently self-critical, particularly in the sixth form, and what does this indicate about the school's capacity for sustained improvement?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school that takes students from a wide geographical area that extends into Birmingham. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is also well below average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The school has had specialist status in the visual and performing arts since 2005. The school works in a consortium with six other providers in order to make more extensive provision available to students in the sixth form.

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

2

Main findings

This school is outstanding. Achievement is rising to ever-higher levels because of a well-established culture that nurtures success at every level. The progress students make is good and improving quickly, particularly in the main school. The unique and very special ethos ensures students develop exceptionally well the skills and attributes they need for their future success. The school is a very welcoming community with care and compassion at its heart. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that all students gain from the opportunities the school provides through its imaginative and comprehensive curriculum. Inspectors were particularly impressed by the excellence of the behaviour of students. All the evidence available to inspectors confirmed that these standards are the norm. Both students and their parents and carers provided strong confirmation of how very safe students feel in school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is superb. Students relish opportunities to interact with those from different backgrounds. The school's very high expectations lead to students developing high moral standards, and the large majority lead healthy lives. They have a strong sense of duty, and participate in activities that help others and improve the environment in the school and beyond.

The large majority of teaching is good or better because teachers use their strong subject knowledge to inspire students and are assiduous in their efforts to ensure all ability groups are challenged. Students have first-class attitudes to learning. Inspectors observed many examples of students demonstrating that they could take responsibility for their own learning. In a small minority of cases, teaching is no better than satisfactory because the level of challenge does not enable all ability groups to make good progress, and marking does not provide enough guidance on how students can reach their targets.

The strengths in teaching and learning are no accident, but stem from leaders at all levels very effectively spreading the good practice they have identified throughout the school. As a result, teaching is good and improving rapidly. Senior leaders support and challenge middle leaders very well so they are highly effective in their roles. The school has developed very strong links with parents and carers, as reflected in their extremely positive questionnaire responses. The visual arts specialism and partnerships with other providers have been used very well to enhance all aspects of provision. The leadership and management of the sixth form are less effective because the focus on students making improved progress is not emphasised sufficiently in the school's self-review and planning. Despite this relative weakness, the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses.

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Together with a good track record of improvement across both the main school and sixth form, this confirms the school's good capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' progress so that it is outstanding, by ensuring that:
 - in all lessons, students of all abilities are fully challenged
 - students throughout the school receive more consistent written feedback on how they can achieve their targets.

- Accelerate progress in the sixth form by improving self-evaluation and planning in this phase.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students enter the school with levels of attainment that are above average, and make good progress to reach high levels of attainment by the time they leave. Attainment is consistently above average in all the subjects taught in the school. Performance at GCSE has risen impressively every year since the last inspection to the extent that only a very small minority of students do not gain five A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Progress has been consistently good in English in recent years. More recently this strong performance has been matched by mathematics, science and religious education. Of the subjects most closely associated with the school's specialism, results in drama are particularly impressive.

The school ensures that all groups progress well. The slight gap in progress that existed between boys and girls has been closed. Lower-attaining students are making much better progress because teachers have improved their ability to meet their needs in lessons. For the same reason students with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress at the same rate as their peers. The school has taken effective steps to ensure these students are fully included in lessons. For instance, teaching assistants provide timely additional support so they can participate in lessons. The school's highly accurate assessment data indicate that further improvements are in the pipeline. Students' attitudes to learning are very positive, even in the lessons where teaching is no better than satisfactory. Students concentrate well and are keen to respond to teachers' questioning. They show considerable perseverance when working independently to solve problems.

Students work well with each other and develop very well the higher-level personal skills that employers value. Their strong basic skills, attendance and punctuality mean they are very well prepared for the next phase of their education and later life. The school is very committed to sustainability and has a very active eco group with a strong record of making a difference. For instance, teachers are rewarded for saving energy and the school has worked with local businesses to produce a well-designed 'bag for life'. All students make a substantial contribution to the wider community.

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For instance, they are actively involved in raising large sums of money and also help determine the charities that benefit from this. Many students contribute through representing their school and/or house in many types of competition. A variety of strategies are used to gain insights into students’ views, including some aimed specifically at those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. This includes surveys, students’ involvement in departmental reviews, and a school council. However, students generally have too little awareness of the outcomes of these activities.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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	1
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	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Questioning is a major strength in lessons, even those that are less effective. Teachers adopt strategies to ensure all students have to think about responses. In the best practice seen, teachers signalled the challenge in their questions by linking this to students’ targets or encouraging paired discussion. Frequently, students were required to evaluate each other’s responses. In the vast majority of lessons students experienced a wide range of activities that kept them engaged. Only rarely did the pace of learning slow. A growing number of lessons are outstanding because teachers inspire students and match the challenge very closely to their abilities. Teachers often insist that students take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in an outstanding science lesson students were given the responsibility for organising all aspects of an investigation into electrical capacitance. The more effective teachers avoided overly long introductions and allowed students to learn from their mistakes. Often they used short review sessions very well to clarify the

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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challenge and to praise students for their efforts. Lesson endings were generally a strength because learning was reviewed effectively and next steps identified. In the small minority of less effective lessons too much time was devoted to all pupils undertaking the same task, regardless of their ability, and insufficient attention was given to identifying how students could excel at what they were doing. In the best practice seen, marking linked strongly to students’ targets. However, in some of the books seen this was largely absent.

The school has made bold decisions in order to develop a more effective curriculum. To encourage excellence, students study subjects in greater depth. The length of lessons has been increased so students can experience a greater range of activities and consider how their learning can be applied. For instance, in a French lesson students were observed learning the vocabulary they needed to successfully role play a scene in which they undertook a transaction in a shop in France. There are effective adaptations for a small minority of students who need an alternative to traditional lessons. The large majority of students, including those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, take advantage of extra-curricular opportunities. A wide variety of visitors and trips are used well to augment the range of activities available, and are often linked to the visual and performing arts specialism. The curriculum very effectively challenges students to consider different cultural perspectives. For instance, students spoke of the memorable work they completed with the internationally renowned poet ‘Dreadlock Alien’.

The excellent care, guidance and support provided are inspired by the school’s ethos and values. The strong relationships between staff and students are a major asset supporting effective care for students, underpinned by good use of assessment that enables the school to target support accurately. High attendance, almost non-existent exclusions and the good progress made by students with special educational needs and/or disabilities all point to the effectiveness of this aspect of provision. The school provided inspectors with many examples of the effective support it provides, particularly for those students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. It has successfully included students excluded from other schools.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a highly principled leader who steadfastly manages the school with only the best interest of each student in mind. A nurturing ethos extends to all

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the adults that work in the school. As a result, staff are highly committed and very proud to be part of the school community. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are very effective because they lead to high-quality professional development that brings about improvements to practice. The school now has a convincing track record of having effectively coached teachers so they have been able to raise their level of performance in the classroom. There is a buzz about teaching and learning throughout the school. Strategic planning in the main school has identified the right priorities and is a useful tool for evaluating the progress made. Middle leaders are increasingly effective because they have a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of their departments. The school is cleverly further increasing its ability to bring about improvement through the use of whole-school development groups. The recent focus on improving questioning has been particularly successful.

Governance is good. The governing body has been instrumental in enabling the improvements that have resulted in the school becoming outstanding. For instance, it has played an important role in developing the curriculum in terms of the specialism and changes to the length of lessons. In the sixth form the governing body knows about attainment in subjects but has given relatively less attention to monitoring progress in this phase. The school’s success in ensuring all groups flourish is testament to its very strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities. Slight unevenness that existed in outcomes between different groups has been eliminated. Despite a few minor glitches, the school meets all the government requirements relating to safeguarding and has created a community in which all members feel exceptionally secure. The school promotes all aspects of community cohesion outstandingly well. Students’ cultural awareness is high because of the wealth of opportunities every student has to interact with those from different faiths through extensive links with communities that are different in the West Midlands and beyond.

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	1
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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for	1

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money

Sixth form

Outcomes in this phase are now good, following several years in which rates of progress lagged behind those achieved in the main school. Attendance is good and effective guidance is improving retention rates. Students have excellent opportunities to contribute positively to the community through supporting younger students in the main school. Personal development is a major strength because of a very comprehensive and well-organised enrichment programme involving all students. A higher than might be expected proportion of students gain access to the prestigious Russell Group universities because students have such a comprehensive and well-rounded education.

The sixth-form lessons seen were of a similar standard to those seen in the main school, therefore students make good progress. There was some variability in the use of assessment, reflecting the fact that the use of aspirational targets is not as well established in this phase. Students were fulsome in their praise they gave for the advice and guidance they receive related to university applications. The consortium arrangements offer students an exceptionally wide variety of courses, including some vocational options.

Effective practice has been identified, and is being effectively spread throughout the sixth form. Better engagement with students and their parents and carers is making a strong contribution to the improvement in students' outcomes. Resources are well managed. However, the rate of improvement is not as quick as in the main school because self-evaluation and improvement planning do not yet fully reflect the same commitment to ensuring outstanding progress.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The response of parents and carers in the questionnaires was very positive. Although many parents and carers did not make any comments on the questionnaires, those that did praised the school for the work it was doing in many areas. Very few critical comments were received. The very large majority of those who responded to the questionnaire agreed with all the statements. A few did not feel that the school helps them support their child's learning, or helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle.

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Inspectors took these views into account when making their judgements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hagley Catholic 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 389 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1055 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	231	59	153	39	4	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	251	65	133	34	4	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	175	45	179	46	12	3	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	174	45	184	47	9	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	216	56	165	42	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	154	40	190	49	18	5	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	145	37	206	53	20	5	1	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)	179	46	172	44	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	178	46	189	49	10	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	214	55	149	38	7	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	148	38	185	48	10	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	231	59	144	37	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	246	63	138	35	1	0	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



14 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Hagley Catholic High School, Hagley, DY8 2XL

I would like to thank you for making us feel very welcome when we visited your school recently. Special thanks go to those of you who met with us, for their informative comments that helped us in making our judgements.

The inspection was a pleasure because so many aspects of your school are excellent. We concluded that your school is outstanding because the outcomes are highly impressive and your school is very well led. The school ensures you make good progress in lessons so that attainment is consistently high. The school is not just about academic achievement but also very effectively promotes all aspects of your personal development. We were particularly impressed by your excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Our extensive investigations proved that this is what normally happens even when inspectors are not in school! We liked that you relish the opportunities you have to interact with people from different backgrounds. Your teachers use their subject knowledge very well to inspire you in lessons. Most are really good at challenging you and they make learning interesting by linking your studies to the outside world. The curriculum you experience meets the needs of all students very well and provides you with many memorable experiences. You are cared for very well indeed.

We have made a few suggestions for things your school can do to ensure you make outstanding progress. You will not be surprised that the school already has plans to address most of these issues. We think that rates of progress could be boosted in the sixth form so they match the picture in the main school. We also think you can help improve your school by taking advantage of choices you are increasingly given in lessons by opting to work at the highest possible level.

I wish you all the best for the future, and good luck.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick
Her Majesty's Inspector

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