

Hodgson School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119713
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327116
Inspection date	24 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Ann Wallis

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tess Rowlands
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
School address	Moorland Road Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire FY6 7EU
Telephone number	01253 882815
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. It also investigated the following issues: standards and achievement (particularly in Years 7 to 9), the quality of provision and how effective the school is in developing best practice in all subject areas. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, students and the chair of governors. Lessons were observed and school documents and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Hodgson School is an above average sized school serving a wide catchment area within the Wyre district of Lancashire. The area has below average levels of social and economic deprivation and the percentage of students entitled to free school meals is low. Most students are White British and very few have English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been a specialist Technology College since 1996 and now, as a high performing specialist school, has a second specialism as a member of the Raising Attainment Partnership Programme. It holds many national awards including Sportsmark, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark, Charter Mark for Excellence and has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hodgson School is an outstanding school which gives excellent value for money. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and his senior team have created a culture of achievement in which students and staff feel valued and supported whilst being challenged to achieve their best. Morale is high. Parents and students are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, and readily acknowledge the excellent education it provides. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting on 'the strong sense of inclusion and belonging as well as the drive for each child to achieve their potential.' Governors, the headteacher and senior leaders have a vision for the school and this is communicated with great clarity to all staff. Governance is outstanding. Governors are extremely knowledgeable about the school and whilst being very supportive are constantly challenging the school to improve further.

Students' achievement is outstanding and standards are high. Students enter the school with above average standards and make good progress in Years 7 to 9. Their rate of progress accelerates as they move through the school and is outstanding in Years 10 and 11. Consequently, students reach high standards by the time they leave Hodgson School with over a third achieving three or more of the highest GCSE A* and A grades. In 2007, Year 9 test results were well above average and provisional data indicates that these have improved further in 2008 because of significant improvement in mathematics. Nevertheless, progress is good, rather than outstanding in Years 7 to 9. GCSE results were high in 2007, and have improved further in 2008 continuing the upward trend of recent years. All groups of students achieve equally well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who receive excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants. GCSE students achieved particularly well in science, mathematics, ICT, vocational courses and English but less well in modern foreign languages.

Students achieve well because teaching and learning are outstanding. Since the last inspection the school has been very successful in increasing the proportion of good and outstanding lessons. Lessons are observed regularly and teachers benefit from skilled coaching from senior staff and willingly sharing good practice with each other. Consequently all staff now have a very clear understanding of what constitutes an excellent lesson. Teachers conduct lessons at a brisk pace and have very high expectations of their students. They use a wide range of resources which stimulates interest so students really enjoy learning and make excellent progress. Students' learning and their progress towards challenging targets is checked constantly.

Students' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is outstanding. Students develop empathy and a real understanding of each others' needs. There are plentiful opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning and they respond extremely well, working diligently to improve the standard of their work. A relentless focus on raising standards and accelerating achievement is reinforced through meticulous tracking of pupils' progress which quickly pinpoints the small number of students who may be at risk of underachieving. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and provide students with the tools for both academic and personal success. Students have a very good understanding of National Curriculum levels and expectations at GCSE and know exactly what they must do to improve their work. There is a very strong focus on developing the skills needed in the work place and this, combined with high standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT, means that students are very well placed for future economic success.

Pastoral care is outstanding and all students, including the very vulnerable, are looked after well. Consequently, students feel safe and secure in school. Risk assessments and safeguarding procedures are all very robust. High expectations, warm, supportive relationships and the constant reinforcement of rules result in students' outstanding behaviour. This, together with students' excellent attendance, makes an important contribution to their outstanding achievement.

The outstanding curriculum is carefully tailored to meet students' needs and is enhanced by the school's specialist status. Recent development of the Year 7 curriculum is helping to ease transition from primary to secondary school and make lessons even more interesting and enjoyable. Vocational education goes from strength to strength and there are extensive opportunities for students, whatever their ability level. Very high expectations of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities combined with excellent support and an appropriate curriculum results in their excellent achievement and a very high proportion gain at least five GCSEs at A* to C. Students' views are very important to the school and improvements are often based on consultations with them. Membership of the active school council allows students to make an important contribution to their own community. The school has excellent links with the local community and a very thorough understanding of its needs. However, the school knows it now needs to develop further students' understanding of the wider UK community and has plans to do so.

Hodgson School's specialist status has allowed the headteacher and a very talented team of senior leaders and staff to share their innovative and very successful practice with other organisations. This has had a real and very measurable impact in raising achievement in partner schools.

Issues from the last inspection concerning teaching and learning and ICT have been addressed successfully and transformed into strengths of the school. The quality of school self-evaluation is outstanding. Consequently Hodgson School is now extremely well placed to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine and develop the current successful strategies to raise further the already good achievement at Key Stage 3.

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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

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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hodgson School, Lancashire, FY6 7EU

We visited your school recently to find out how well you are achieving and how well your school is supporting you. We really appreciated the warm welcome you gave us and would particularly like to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk with us. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes and the knowledgeable and honest way you talked about your school.

What we have said about your school in the inspection report.

Yours is an outstanding school.

Your achievement is outstanding and you reach high standards.

The leadership and management of your school are excellent.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum you study are outstanding.

Your school gives you outstanding care, guidance and support and provides excellent personal development.

Your attendance is excellent and your behaviour is outstanding.

What we have asked your school to do now.

Refine and develop the current successful strategies to raise further your already good achievement at Key Stage 3.

You can help your school to improve even further by continuing to work with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Wallis Susan Walsh

Lead inspector Team inspector