

Hawkley Hall High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106532
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	333221
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall 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 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	837
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs D Taylor
Headteacher	Mr R Halford
Date of previous school inspection	6–7 December 2006
School address	Carr Lane Hawkley Hall, Wigan Lancashire WN3 5NY
Telephone number	01942 204640
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Email address	admin@hhhs.net

Age group	11–16 years
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 39 lessons and made further visits to classrooms to sample provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, faculty action plans, and internal and external monitoring. Inspectors also took account of the 433 questionnaire returns from parents, 56 returns from staff and 157 returns from students.

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

- the extent to which students of all ability make progress and enjoy their learning
- students' personal development and well-being and how well the school cares, guides and supports them
- how well students apply key skills across subjects
- how well assessment is used to ensure that teaching is well matched to individual students' learning needs
- how effectively leaders and governors drive and secure improvement and promote equal opportunities in all aspects of the school's work
- the impact of the school's specialist status on students' experiences and outcomes.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than average and serves an area of mixed housing. The majority of students are White British. The school achieved specialist engineering college status in September 2004. It works in collaboration with four local high schools and together they have formed a skills centre delivering construction and engineering skills for 14–16-year-old students from each school. The school has recently developed a resourced provision with 15 places for students with autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

Hawkley Hall High School has gained a number of external awards since the last inspection, including Artsmark, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Continuous Professional Development Quality Mark and Inclusion Quality Mark.

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

Hawkley Hall High is an outstanding school providing an excellent quality of education and care for its students. Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and productive teamwork of all staff, all aspects of provision have greatly improved since the last inspection. Students' outcomes have improved as a consequence and key aspects are outstanding. Central to the school's success is a strong moral purpose, shared by all, to ensure that all students succeed and achieve to the best of their ability both academically and personally. This is exemplified not only in the way adults support students but also in the way students encourage and care for each other. The 'Hawkley Way', which has mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance at its heart, is proudly upheld by all at the school. A comment from one student: 'Teachers go the extra mile to make sure everyone's needs are met. The school is like a big community – we all help each other,' typifies the views of many.

Teaching is mostly good with some outstanding lessons and a minority that are satisfactory. In all lessons teachers use assessment very effectively to support learning and meet the needs of different groups and individuals. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very effectively supported and make excellent progress in their learning. The outstanding curriculum has been skilfully revised to develop students' individual interests and aptitudes and promote key skills for learning. The personalised approach means that all can achieve highly. The success of the curriculum and the impact of good teaching and outstanding quality of care, guidance and support are seen in students' outstanding progress and success in examinations across the ability range. The proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has significantly improved and is well above the national average. These high standards are being sustained across the school in all subjects. The quality of provision is greatly enhanced by the school's specialist engineering status. Funding has been used imaginatively to enhance students' experiences and develop their key skills across all aspects of school life.

The impact is seen also in students' excellent personal development and attitudes to learning. Their behaviour during the inspection was exemplary both in lessons and around the school. They are keen to take on responsibility and make an excellent contribution to the running of the school. Parents' and students' questionnaire returns confirm that students feel safe and that bullying and racist incidents are extremely rare. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding.

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They have a well-developed sense of human rights and respect for others and excellent relationships with each other and staff. Opportunities for them to engage with people from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds and to contribute to the wider community are limited and are identified as areas for improvement.

The success of the school is underpinned by the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team. Their inspirational vision and drive to secure success for every student is shared by all staff. The 'can do' culture motivates students and staff alike to seek success and bring about further improvements. It is well supported by the strong leadership and drive from faculty leaders. This is evident in the shared ambition to ensure that teaching continues to capture students' imagination and enthusiasm for learning and to continue to drive standards up. The school has outstanding capacity for sustained improvement supported by excellent performance management processes and supportive staff development. The school deploys its resources imaginatively and highly effectively, giving excellent value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is at the standard of the very best in school by sharing the best practice between teachers, for example through the planned action research groups.
- Help students to develop their understanding of diversity and strengthen the school's impact in the wider community by:
 - seeking opportunities for students to interact with others from diverse backgrounds
 - seeking opportunities for students and teachers to contribute to the wider community
 - establishing links with other schools to share and develop best practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Students are highly motivated to succeed and thoroughly enjoy their learning across the full range of subjects. They show immense concentration and perseverance when faced with challenging tasks. They listen carefully to each other's comments and opinions and in the most effective lessons they show that they are able to apply their knowledge with excellent levels of independence to challenge each other. Their exceptional attitude to learning helps them to make excellent progress from their broadly average starting points. This is the case for students of all abilities and with diverse learning needs. Support structures are very well matched to the needs of vulnerable students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling these groups to make outstanding progress.

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Students' attainment in examinations has improved significantly in the last three years. Attainment in GCSE was well above national averages in 2008, and a higher than average proportion attained A* to C grades in the school's specialist subjects of science and mathematics. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, was also well above average. These high standards have been sustained, and bettered in some aspects, in 2009. School data and lesson observations confirm that students are continuing to make good and often outstanding progress to attain high standards across the whole school.

Students were proud to tell inspectors about the community spirit and supportive ethos of their school. They play a big part in this and make an outstanding contribution to their school. They arrive punctually and attendance is above average for all year groups. They appreciate the very positive relationships they enjoy with adults and each other and feel confident that they can seek support should they need it. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years and the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing. Students have good awareness of cultural diversity but they have had limited opportunities to engage with others from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and enjoy the range of physical activities the school offers. While they understand the benefits of a healthy diet, many are honest enough to say that they have not fully adopted healthy eating into their lifestyles. Students acquire a good range of skills and personal qualities to help them in their further education and careers. Almost all progress to further education or training.

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	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Staff have shown exceptional drive and commitment to improve all aspects of provision since the last inspection. All teachers have very good knowledge of their subject and include a good range of enjoyable and motivating teaching strategies. Relationships are supportive and constructive, giving the students confidence to seek extra help when they need it and to persevere with demanding tasks. In the best lessons teachers inspire students with excellent questioning and well-planned activities that challenge students' thinking. Students respond to the teachers' joy of the subject and all students make excellent progress because tasks are well matched to their learning needs. In the minority of less effective lessons, students have less time to explore and develop their own learning and ideas because the lessons are more dominated by activity carried out by the teacher and tasks are not as well matched to students' individual needs.

The development of assessment to support learning has been a whole-school focus and is a strength in the majority of lessons. Students feel confident in asking for help because relationships are constructive and teachers encourage open dialogue. Consequently, students have a good understanding of ways in which they can improve their work and feel well supported to do so. Assessment is also used very effectively at whole-school level to monitor students' progress and ensure that any student who is not making the expected progress is given appropriate support. This involves regular review by faculty leaders and senior leaders of each student's progress across all subjects.

The curriculum has been exceptionally well developed to meet the interests and needs of all groups of students. There is a clear and effective emphasis on ensuring that students acquire basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. At Key Stage 3 an increased emphasis on promoting students' thinking skills and skills for learning across the curriculum is helping students engage with and take responsibility for their learning. These aspects are strongly promoted through the school's engineering specialism, and further school-wide engineering-related activities ensure a positive impact of specialist status.

A very wide range of academic, vocational and alternative courses at Key Stage 4 mean that students can follow and develop their individual interests and aptitudes. Courses are offered at a variety of levels providing increased opportunities for accreditation for students of all abilities. Programmes for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are tailored exceptionally well to meet their individual needs across the whole school. Higher-attaining students are increasingly able to extend their learning through fast track options and AS-level provision. The school's innovative approach to curriculum development is evident in the off-site skills centre that has been set up in conjunction with other local secondary schools. Here students can learn construction skills and have access to a range of work-related learning.

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Alongside academic and vocational courses, the comprehensive programme of personal development promotes students' knowledge and understanding of wider issues and excellent extra-curricular and enrichment activities provide them with a range of beneficial experiences.

Teachers' and other adults' commitment to ensuring that students experience academic and personal success is at the heart of the school. Strenuous efforts are made to ensure that students are happy, secure and well cared for and that any barriers to success are removed. There are comprehensive and effective arrangements for pastoral care for all students. A very extensive range of more specialised support and advice from both school staff and external agencies serves students with additional learning and personal needs exceptionally well. Specifically targeted guidance is provided at key points of transition. Year 7 students have been made to feel welcome and become comfortable with school expectations and routines very quickly. Older students receive individual guidance on courses in Key Stage 4 and on post-school options.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	1
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, the senior leadership team and governors drive a powerful vision for the school focused on nurturing all students' academic and personal growth. Governors have high aspirations for students. The commitment of staff and their strong drive for improvement are evident in all aspects of their work. They have enthusiastically embraced change and share school leaders' high ambitions. As a result, the quality of provision has significantly improved since the last inspection.

Very effective systems for monitoring performance enable school leaders to identify where improvement is needed and they act quickly to tackle weaknesses and provide additional support. Teachers view the regular faculty reviews as supportive and constructive. Middle leadership is strong and faculty leaders set high targets which are wholly supported by teachers. An excellent programme of continuous professional development enables staff to develop their own skills and to lead initiatives, for example through the action research groups. The strong teamwork and shared sense of purpose is evident through teachers' enthusiasm about the 'engineering weekends'. During these weekends teachers lead sessions in various

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aspects such as social and emotional learning, group discussion skills and qualities of outstanding lessons.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Appropriate checks are carried out on all staff and visitors to the school and all staff and nominated governors receive regular training to update them on safeguarding and child protection procedures. Thorough risk assessments are carried out on students' activities and the school takes care to identify and support students who may be at risk. The school works very effectively with other agencies to support the most vulnerable and promote students' well-being. The school-based police officer is a popular addition to the school's staff and helps students feel safe. Partnerships with primary schools are extremely effective in supporting students at points of transition and collaborative work with local secondary schools and businesses do much to enrich the curriculum.

The school has an excellent knowledge of its own community. Staff's detailed understanding of the needs of different groups and individuals helps to promote a cohesive environment in the school. Equal opportunity is the guiding principle underpinning the school's code of conduct, the 'Hawkley Way', which continuously promotes mutual respect, tolerance and acceptance. The close adherence to this by staff and students creates a climate that is truly inclusive. All students are highly valued as individuals and active measures to remove barriers to success are taken to very good effect.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires were returned by 56% of parents and carers, which is a high response rate. The vast majority say that they are happy overall with their children's experience at the school. They are pleased with the leadership, for example stating, 'The headteacher is very approachable and cares very much for staff and students and has time for all parents.' They feel that the school generally deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and meets the particular needs of individuals. A very small minority feel that the school could do more in helping them to support their children's learning and take account of their suggestions and concerns. The high response rate is indicative of parents' and carers' overwhelming support for the school and satisfaction with the quality of education provided. Inspection findings uphold their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hawkley Hall 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 433 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 837 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	157	36	251	58	15	3	2	0
The school keeps my child safe	179	41	239	55	4	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	143	33	247	57	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	165	38	222	51	11	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	169	39	233	53	4	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	111	25	256	59	37	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	85	19	299	69	23	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)	137	31	289	66	9	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	135	31	255	58	13	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	142	32	235	54	22	5	8	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	88	20	276	63	28	6	2	0
The school is led and managed effectively	165	38	238	55	5	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	190	43	218	50	8	1	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 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

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>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.



17 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Hawkley Hall High School, Wigan, WN3 5NY

Thank you for your welcome and helpful contributions to your recent school inspection. Inspectors thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and observing your work around the school. Thank you too for your comments on the questionnaires. One of you said, 'The school always tries to improve in different ways.' Another said, 'This school rocks! – it's great.' We agree. **Your school has improved significantly and it is now outstanding.**

These are the main findings from our report.

- School leaders and all staff are highly committed to giving you the best chances to develop academically and personally.
- The headteacher and school leaders provide inspirational leadership to ensure that the school continues to improve and it has excellent capacity to sustain improvements.
- The caring ethos and the way in which you all uphold 'the Hawkley Way' is a credit to you all.
- Your behaviour was exemplary during the inspection and the care and consideration you show to others is commendable.
- You have excellent attitudes to work and are making excellent progress in your studies. The improved results in examinations indicate how hard you work and how well your teachers provide for you.
- Teaching is mostly good and the curriculum is outstanding. This helps all of you achieve and succeed.

We have asked the school to improve a couple of aspects to make your school even better.

- Ensure that all teaching is at the standard of the very best in school.
- Help you to develop your understanding of diversity and strengthen the school's impact in the wider community by giving you more opportunities to interact with others from diverse backgrounds and contribute to the wider community.

We wish you every success in the future and hope you fulfil your ambitions.

Jean Kendall HMI

on behalf of the inspection team

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