

Houghton Kepier Sports College: An Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	137262
Local authority	Not Applicable
Inspection number	385586
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2012
Lead inspector	Tom Grieveson HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,056
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Collins
Headteacher	Nicola Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Houghton Le Spring Tyne And Wear DH4 5BH
Telephone number	0191 553 6528
Fax number	0191 553 6533
Email address	info@hksc.org.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Tom Grieveson
Peter Harrison
Janice Gorlach
David Griffiths

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 38 lessons, taught by 37 teachers. A further 14 short observations were conducted on day 2 of the inspection to evaluate the quality of provision for targeted groups of students. Inspectors held meetings with senior staff, the Chair of Governors, subject and middle leaders and groups of students. The on-line questionnaire (Parent View) was not used in the planning of the inspection because too few comments had been registered. Inspectors observed the academy's work, and considered a range of documentation including self-evaluation and improvement plans, governing body meeting minutes, safeguarding and risk assessment evidence. A significant range of students' work was examined through sampling their books and files and in lessons. The content of 133 inspection questionnaires submitted by parents and carers, the 28 provided by staff and the 131 completed by students was also considered.

Information about the academy

Houghton Kepier Sports College converted to academy status in August 2011 under the leadership of a new principal. The site is close to the centre of Houghton-le-Spring and the majority of students live locally. While the academy is larger than most secondary schools, the student roll has declined in recent years. An above average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free academy meals. Few are from minority ethnic communities or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs is similar to that seen in the majority of other schools. The academy holds a number of accreditations including International Schools Award (Gold), Healthy Schools Status, Food for Life (Silver) and the Youth Sports Trust Award (Gold).

Government floor standards were met by the predecessor school in 2011.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- The academy provides its students with a satisfactory education. Outcomes are improving because the principal has moved quickly to reorganise and realign senior leadership responsibilities. This has sharpened their accountability for students' performance and greatly improved their effectiveness in driving change. Consequently, students' progress is rising with the large majority now making expected gains.
- In 2011, the increase in wider GCSE and vocational results represented a marked shift in student outcomes compared to the previous two years. Nonetheless, the proportion of students attaining five or more good GCSE passes including in English and mathematics, while improving, remained below the national average.
- The teaching seen during the inspection was mostly satisfactory with about one third good. Relationships between teachers and students are positive and this creates a purposeful climate for learning in almost all classes. Too often, however, teachers take limited account of students' prior learning when planning lessons so that all students complete the same tasks irrespective of their ability; this does not promote learning as well as it should. Teachers' marking of students' work ranges from excellent to poor. At best it gives precise details about students' achievements and about how to improve their work, but this is not consistent across all subjects.
- Students' behaviour is good. Discussion and questionnaire responses show that students feel safe and express confidence in staff to support them. Their attitudes and commitment to their studies are strong with the large majority keen to do well. Around the academy students respect the welfare and safety of others so that corridors and shared spaces are calm and well ordered. Effective actions, and accurate tracking systems, have improved attendance to broadly average with a corresponding sharp decline in persistent absence.
- The large majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire expressed high satisfaction ratings with most aspects of the academy's performance.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the academy need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment for all groups of students, particularly in English and mathematics, so that they all make consistently good progress given their starting points and capabilities.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better in all year groups and in all subjects by:
 - ensuring that teachers make effective use of assessment information when planning lessons so that activities match students' learning needs
 - providing students with regular written and verbal feedback about their work so they are clear about their achievements and certain about how they can improve further towards their targets
 - ensuring that there are routine opportunities for students to demonstrate greater independence in their work
 - ensuring that teachers make efficient use of their own time throughout lessons so as to maximise their impact on students' learning and progress.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Students' achievement is satisfactory and improving for all groups. In lessons, the large majority display positive attitudes and are keen to learn. They persevere with tasks even when these are too difficult or lack challenge. Opportunities to work independently, including with other students, are productive but limited. Good examples of teachers' planning to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects were seen, but these instances are rare and lack co-ordination.

Students' attainment on entry to the academy is well below average. In 2011, the proportion of students gaining five or more good GCSE or equivalent grades, including English and mathematics, improved compared to the previous year, but remained below the national average. Wider GCSE results rose sharply with vocational options contributing substantially to students' overall outcomes. There was, however, too much variation in the performance of different groups of students with girls and some students with disabilities and special educational needs underachieving. Inspection evidence, and convincing assessment information provided by senior staff, show that concerted efforts to meet the needs of these groups is underpinning better progress and differences are reducing. The academy's sports specialism continues to contribute strongly to students' outcomes.

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire expressed confidence in the academy's provision and considered that their child is making good progress. While this is accurate for some groups of students, the majority is making only satisfactory progress. Written concerns expressed by some parents and carers about the irregular use of homework are justified.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is predominantly satisfactory. Over one third is good. A small proportion is outstanding while a similar amount is inadequate.

Relationships between teachers and students are strong. Students are overwhelmingly respectful and respond positively to teachers' instructions and requests. In many lessons, teachers' explanations enable students to engage effectively and work hard on a range of planned and varied activities. Teachers' questioning is often used well to interest and engage students although this is not consistently evident in all classes because questioning can be superficial, resulting in lost opportunities to assess learning, challenge students' perceptions or check their understanding. Teachers clearly work hard in preparing lessons, but not enough account is routinely taken of students' prior learning so that too often all students undertake the same task irrespective of their abilities. This results in lower- and higher-attaining students in particular not being adequately catered for and this limits their progress. While teachers respond well to individual students who require help, their time is not pro-actively planned to engage with targeted individuals or groups to support or extend learning as effectively as it could be.

Where learning is most effective, teachers demonstrate enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge with very good examples seen in science, physical education and English. Work offers challenge, is genuinely interesting and tasks are well matched to students' capabilities because they build successfully on previous learning and are matched carefully to individual needs. Students respond with great enthusiasm, their engagement is high and learning proceeds effectively. They particularly enjoy working with others on shared activities, but these opportunities are too infrequent.

The curriculum is becoming progressively better aligned to students' needs and interests. The work of staff in the 'Achievement for All' base is a good example of how curriculum change is being targeted effectively to engage those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This provision is supporting improvements in learning and in securing better attendance. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education benefits from opportunities offered through the curriculum, including the academy's sports specialism. This is evident in the strength of students' confidence in the academy and their willingness to participate so enthusiastically. Frequent engagement in the community and with community groups enables students to benefit from the knowledge and experience afforded from these external sources.

The marking of students' work ranges from excellent to inadequate. Accurate summaries of students' achievements and a clear focus on where improvement is required characterise effective feedback and provide students with a clear understanding of how to improve their work. The converse is also apparent, because all too often students are given neither accurate feedback nor any information about how to make progress. Homework is underused to develop students' independence, personal responsibility or extend learning. Parents' and carers' views tend to reflect these extremes.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelming majority of students demonstrate good behaviour in lessons and around the academy site. They are respectful of each other and the adults with whom they engage. The large majority arrives punctually to lessons. Attendance has improved and is broadly

average; effective strategies have seen persistent absenteeism decline sharply. Students say they feel safe and are confident that staff are approachable and supportive. Academy systems to secure good behaviour and tackle unacceptable conduct are well understood. Students are supportive of the academy's expectations and recognise that if their behaviour is unacceptable the consequences are fair and transparent. Behaviour was managed well in almost all lessons seen during the inspection. When teaching is most effective and students engage productively and enthusiastically in learning, their behaviour can be exemplary. In discussion, students are candid about bullying and its effects – they have a good understanding of its different forms. They are aware that occasional bullying occurs but consider it to be rare because of the work done by the academy to raise students' awareness and the manner in which incidents are dealt with. They have a good knowledge about how to keep safe; they are keenly aware of the potential threats from sources on the Internet. Leadership opportunities offered to students support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. International schools' recognition reflects students' good understanding of cultures and societies different from their own.

A very high proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire considers that the academy manages students' behaviour well. A minority expressed some concerns, however. Of these, some were satisfied that matters had been resolved effectively, while a few others were less content with the academy's procedures.

Leadership and management

The principal and senior leaders have ensured that there is a resolute focus on raising students' attainment through targeted actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning and by acting decisively to strengthen the curriculum offer for students. High ambition and expectations of students' capabilities are reflected in the academy's improvement plan. This work is securely underpinning improvements in student outcomes.

Senior leaders' recent evaluations of the academy's performance are precise about what requires improvement. Determined efforts to drive change in teaching and learning through professional development opportunities are well planned. The curriculum is being substantially remodelled; effective leadership has ensured that it is both innovative and forward-thinking. It has for example, been rebalanced to better suit more able students while offering a well considered range of course options for all students. Provision for lower-attaining students is still weighted towards vocational subjects with additional and flexible use of time for additional English and mathematics sessions. It satisfactorily promotes equality of opportunity for all students and increasingly engages those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

The move to academy status has been effectively planned and well considered by governors. Governance structures have been successfully aligned to absorb additional responsibilities. The Chair of Governors reflects a clear strategic overview of the academy's future opportunities including well thought out plans for the establishment of a sixth form and in playing a prominent role locally in raising aspirations. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and give no cause for concern.

The realignment of senior leadership responsibilities has been timely and well considered. Accountability for students' performance is underpinned through direct line management responsibilities for subject leader performance. While this structure has become secure at

the higher tiers of leadership, further work is required for it to be fully effective and understood at middle leadership level.

Given the impact of leaders' actions and the improvements already made, there is good capacity to sustain this improvement.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the academy, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their academy.



10 February 2012

Dear Students

**Inspection of Houghton Kepier Sports College: An Academy, Sunderland
DH4 5BH**

Thank you for your participation in the inspection of the academy and particularly those groups of students who met with us. Your views have helped shape the inspection outcomes. The report is complete and I want to share our main findings with you.

Houghton Kepier provides you with a satisfactory education. We were delighted to observe your good and mature behaviour, the way you engage in learning and the positive relationships you have with adults. Well done! While your achievement is broadly average when compared to all schools nationally, it is clear that matters are improving and that your results and the progress you make in lessons are increasing well compared to previous years. While there is much to do, things are moving ahead positively. They are moving positively because of the good work and clear leadership provided by the principal and senior staff in making sure that actions are being taken to develop teaching and provide you with a better curriculum offer. From your discussions with the inspection team, we know that you are keen to see the academy improve and will want to support the staff in their work. Your ideas will be well received.

The detailed findings of the inspection are contained in the report; you are welcome to read it. We have asked the governors and staff to concentrate in particular on helping you all to make better progress and attain higher levels by ensuring that the proportion of good and better lessons increases.

Thank you again for your help. Please accept the best wishes of the inspection team for your future success.

Yours sincerely,

Tom Grieveson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.