

Hunters Hill Technology College

Spirehouse Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1OD

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership and management have resulted in excellent improvement and a high-quality nurturing environment in which all students flourish.
- The school makes a tremendous difference to the lives of its students, providing opportunities that help them to achieve exceptionally well from their individual starting points.
- Outstanding teaching enables students to make better than expected progress in English and mathematics, and in their personal development.
- Older students attain good-quality accreditation, including GCSEs and Entry Level qualifications, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11.
- Work-related experiences prepare students extremely well for the world of work.
- Parents say that their children enjoy school and are rightly very pleased with their children's education.
- The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools. Outcomes for students in the residence are outstanding, preparing them extremely well for their future lives. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the residence is outstanding.
- Behaviour improves rapidly as students move through the school and is almost always good. Students say they feel safe. Attendance is rising year on year but a few students are still persistently absent.
- An outstanding range of experiences for all groups of students in subjects and topics promote their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher has a very ambitious vision for the school. Senior leaders and managers are very sharply focused on improving the performance of staff through rigorous training and checks on their work.
- The governing body makes an excellent contribution to the school's effectiveness and work to raise achievement through its regular visits to check teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons, many of them jointly with senior leaders. In addition, an inspector listened to some students read.
- In the residence, inspectors observed students' activities in the mornings and evenings.
- Meetings were held, in the school and in the residence, with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, the head of care, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, teachers, support staff and many students.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and the residence. They looked at a number of documents, including the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, school information about students' progress, planning and monitoring documents, care documents, safeguarding information and pupils' work.
- The inspectors took account of the school's own parent questionnaires as there were too few responses to the online survey (Parent View). They also took account of 30 responses from staff.

Inspection team

Denise Morris, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector

Dawn Bennett

Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hunters Hill Technology College is a special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A few students have associated learning difficulties due to long absences from previous schools. A minority have additional autistic spectrum disorders, Asperger's syndrome, attention deficit disorders or obsessive compulsive disorder. All students have a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, these students are mainly of British Caribbean heritage, but none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium is well above average. This additional government funding is provided for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority, or have a parent in the armed forces.
- The vast majority of students are boys.
- The school has on-site weekly residential provision in four different houses providing 37 beds. The accommodation is used flexibly and most pupils stay in the residence for only one or two nights a week. As a result over 60 pupils can have a short stay each week.
- The school has close links with the local Colmers School to support reintegration, and with South City College and University College Birmingham to promote work-related and academic qualifications for older students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the attendance of the small minority of students who are persistently absent by working closely with them and their parents.
- Additional good practice recommendations to be considered by the residence:
 - ensure that outcomes from monitoring the provision across the residences are clearly recorded so that there is a clear view of actions taken over time.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students' attainment on entry to the school is usually well below average for their age, often because of long absences from their previous mainstream schools. They soon settle and begin to catch up, achieving exceptionally well in all areas of learning.
- Students make at least the progress expected of all students nationally. A high proportion make better than expected progress in English, in mathematics, and in their personal development. As a result, the proportion of students attaining good-quality qualifications is rising. Boys and girls make similar progress in reading, writing, communication and mathematics.
- Students make excellent progress in their communication skills. This was clearly evident in the many conversations inspectors held with them. They are confident and keen to provide their views. They benefit from regular presentations in class and to their parents at the regular school performances.
- The progress of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who have additional special educational needs is outstanding. They benefit from extra support and specific targets that enable them to make at least the progress expected of them.
- Progress is good in writing. In reading, it is outstanding because of the very effective focus on reading regularly, both in class and in the residence. When students have read 10 books, for example, they receive a free book of their choice to take home and they value this incentive highly. As a result of this and also because of the very effective approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) for younger students, the development of reading skills is excellent. By the end of Year 7 or Year 8, many students reach the standard expected nationally for their age.
- Students make outstanding progress in mathematics because they enjoy the challenges and the practical tasks, often working hard to solve things for themselves. Year 10 students were seen working very well in pairs to solve problems, sharing ideas and helping each other. Timed challenges in lessons help to improve students' mental calculation skills and extend their abilities to think about their answers.
- Students have many excellent experiences that develop skills that will help them in the future. In design and technology, for example, a group of Year 8 boys were learning how to solder two wires together as part of a challenge to make a solar-powered car. They benefited from high-quality resources as they concentrated hard to succeed with their task. In the on-site garage, two Year 9 boys were learning how to take wheels off a car and remove the tyres as part of their introduction to a motor vehicle qualification. These experiences are very well received and at such times, students concentrate, engage well with staff and work cooperatively.
- Almost all students are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. The school makes sure that they all achieve equally well in English and mathematics because the extra funding is used very well to employ extra staff to support these students and to fund some on trips to ensure that they all have the same opportunities.
- Some excellent work-related opportunities for older students prepare them very well for the next stage of their education. These include learning tasks that often lead them into employment. In recent years, all students who leave Year 11 have moved on to employment or training courses.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teachers across the school have excellent skills in managing students, as well as subject-specific expertise to ensure high levels of progress. All staff are skilled at diffusing situations rapidly so that seamless learning takes place. This was evident in an English lesson in Year 7, where the teacher was quick to intervene as he saw a situation arising, defusing it quietly so that learning continued and students all made the progress expected.
- Outstanding teaching enables students to make excellent progress in their learning and their behaviour. Very effective questioning and the use of interactive whiteboards, charts and pictures all help to engage students in learning. Boys and girls respond well to the very high quality of support that is always available.
- The teaching of mathematics is very successful because teachers focus on practical approaches that enable students to work at their own pace to solve problems. Often, teachers use games or everyday occurrences to stimulate discussion, such as when students in Years 7 and 8 were making three-dimensional shapes with cardboard in order to find out about the number of sides and angles each one had. The practical approaches and outstanding questioning in the lesson extended students' knowledge and led to excellent understanding of the differences between shapes.
- The quality of teachers' assessment has improved since the last inspection, and students' work is now accurately marked with very helpful comments pointing out next steps. Teaching assistants are used outstandingly well to promote pupils' learning, concentration and improvement, and all students are clearly aware of their targets and can say what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Teaching has been improved over the past few years, with high-quality training in phonics ensuring that the teaching of reading is accurate. As a result, younger students in particular quickly catch up and overcome past inadequacies, making excellent progress in reading. Teachers make the learning of phonics fun with games and videos so that students engage very well and enjoy their successes.
- Inspirational teaching in work-related education, such as car mechanics, food technology and electronics, results in outstanding learning and ensures that students are very well prepared for their future lives.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school has excellent ways of managing the students' very challenging behavioural, social and emotional needs so that they are able to stay in class and learn. Outstanding care and support, both at school and in the residence, enable them to learn how to manage their own behaviour.
- There are many examples from case studies of students who had been out of school for some time and those excluded or on the brink of exclusion from their mainstream schools improving their behaviour, social and emotional development quickly once they start at Hunters Hill. They quickly start to turn their lives around and there have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years.

- During lunch with an inspector, students in Years 7 and 8 said that the school has really helped them to manage their behaviour because of the way they are able to earn rewards. They talked about being the 'top 14 students' in a week, the ones who have gained the most rewards so they are offered outings to activity centres, such as paint-balling or bowling for example. The students said that they all really value this and work hard to be 'on the bus'.
- Students said that although there is some bullying or teasing, it is quickly dealt with. They said that they feel very safe at school, and know how to stay safe in the community and when using the internet. Observations of students in the play areas showed calm and productive activities, and records show that behavioural incidents are decreasing rapidly.
- Students say that they enjoy this school because staff are always on hand to support them. Members of the students' council said that they are fully involved in having a say about what happens at school, and students generally say that they are listened to.
- Students' positive attitudes to school are evident in their rising attendance. Attendance has risen year on year since the previous inspection and is now similar to that of secondary schools nationally. Leaders are working closely with students and families of the few persistent absentees who still do not attend often enough.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is passionate about improving the lives of his students. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and the governors. Together, they have effectively built on the school's previous good performance to further improve the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour over the past three years.
- Parents agree that their children achieve outstandingly well. The strong support for families from the school and residential staff plays an important role in the overall wrap-around care provided for each student. Close links between the school and the residence have a strong effect also on the outstanding quality of care and support, and on students' achievements.
- Leaders make very effective use of the national standards for teaching when observing lessons, and are highly committed to developing teachers' skills. There are many excellent examples of staff at all levels progressing up the pay scales because of high-quality training which has helped them to improve their effectiveness and seek promotion.
- Leaders rigorously monitor teaching and learning each half-term. Together with the governing body they ensure that each teacher is observed regularly, and receives feedback to consolidate or improve their skills. Leaders are fully aware of which teachers require support, and which deserve promotion.
- The school is rigorous about making sure that all staff have regular training in the management of behaviour. As a result, the correct approaches are used and students know what is expected of them. This leads to some rapid improvements in individual students' behaviour.
- The school is well supported by the local authority's special educational needs department, which has helped it in making judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and students' progress. The local authority is actively involved in supporting managed placements to enable students to return to mainstream education when they are ready for it.

- There are some excellent links with other local schools, who recognise the valuable contribution that Hunters Hill makes to the lives of students and to their schools. Local headteachers value the school’s work highly, and work in close partnership to provide students with a second chance. As a result, the rate of reintegration into mainstream schools is rising.
- The range of subjects and topics has been enriched and strengthened, and provides outstandingly well for the needs and abilities of all groups. Successful outreach work with families is a key feature of the school’s success, ensuring a consistent 24-hour approach that is helping students and parents to manage behaviour and seek success.
- Very effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident through the many visits, trips and expeditions to various countries around the world. Recent involvement in the Three Peaks Challenge, for example, shows how the school inspires aspiration in its students by enabling them to become involved in fundraising activities.
- Leaders successfully eliminate discrimination through their very effective policies and procedures, which make sure that all students have an equal opportunity to enjoy all the experiences on offer.
- Safeguarding procedures fully meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very supportive and provides excellent challenge to the school. Governors are fully involved in checks on teaching, learning and behaviour, and fully understand data so they are able to check how well students are doing. Governors make an excellent contribution to the school’s overall effectiveness. Their rigorous monitoring has helped teaching and achievement to improve, and they have the capacity to take the school forward. They have a wide range of skills that they use for the benefit of the school. Regular involvement in evaluating the school’s performance means that governors are fully aware of how well students are doing and how effective the teaching is. They have a clear understanding of the continuing need to do even more to improve attendance. Governors manage the school’s finances very well and make sure that money allocated for students eligible for pupil premium funding is focused on enhancing their experiences and their achievements, so their learning is at least as good as that of their classmates. Governors make sure that the best teachers and staff are rewarded appropriately.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	is outstanding
Residential pupils’ safety	is outstanding
Leadership and management of the residential provision	are outstanding

- The school provides a specialist service that supports individuals to achieve excellent outcomes. Young people make outstanding personal progress, developing effective social skills, building emotional resilience and a wide range of independence skills. They become active and valued members of the school community and develop skills that support them to successfully move on in their adult lives.
- Very close links between the residence and the school ensure that students feel safe and always

have someone to go to if they have any concerns. Staff in the residence rigorously support students with homework, and there is a dedicated reading time every day in each of the residential houses. Several staff work in the residence and the school, ensuring that students are well known and that there is a clear view of the whole child.

- All students, including day students, start their school day in one of the residences. Each student is linked to a residence so that they can go there for breakfast, for support, to prepare themselves for school or to meet their friends. This ensures that there is a calm start to lessons.
 - The quality of residential provision and care is outstanding. The school promotes a positive ethos that fully embraces diversity and difference, valuing the individual. Young people receive a service which is tailored to meet their personal needs.
 - All staff have excellent knowledge of the young people in their care and make sure that their needs are fully met. Staff work proactively with parents and other professionals to ensure a high quality service where the ethos is centred around meeting the individual needs and aspirations of each individual student.
 - The systems in place to safeguard young people are robust. Students are safe, happy and feel respected by staff and one another. Staff are professional and well informed, and they make sure that students' safety is a priority at all times. Partnership work is effective and well established with parents and external professional and agencies.
 - The school's management team and governors have excellent insight into the operation of the service and ensure proper scrutiny of all aspects of residential care. Any shortfall in these areas is identified and addressed.
 - Leadership of the residence is outstanding, ensuring that young people have a high-quality experience. Residential leaders have rightly introduced rigorous new checking systems to improve the quality of provision. Despite some outstanding practical aspects of current provision, which result in excellent outcomes for young people, information from monitoring procedures is not securely recorded. This has an effect on leaders' ability to show improvements in provision over time.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	103609
Social care unique reference number	SC043050
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	400632

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Number of boarders on roll	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Field
Headteacher	Ken Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 March 2010
Telephone number	0121 445 1320
Fax number	N/A
Email address	enquiry@hunthill.bham.sch.uk

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