



Howden School and Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118084
Local Authority East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 291016
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Honoree Gordon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Derwent Road
School category	Community		Howden, Goole
Age range of pupils	11–18		East Yorkshire, DN14 7AL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01430 430870
Number on roll (school)	803	Fax number	01430 432435
Number on roll (6th form)	16		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Robert Armitage
		Headteacher	Mr Andrew Williams
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	12–13 September 2006	291016

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has been a specialist technology college since 2003. Its numbers are growing rapidly. It is quite isolated geographically and many pupils arrive by school buses. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. Around one fifth of the pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There is a very small sixth form which operates in a consortium with another local school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school which has become increasingly popular, with justification. Pupils clearly enjoy their education and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Pupils are now making good progress. Standards have risen year on year and are now average. Early indications from the 2006 tests and examinations suggest a further improvement in standards. The arrival of the new headteacher has given further impetus to this rapidly improving picture. He is encouraging middle managers to be more involved in taking on responsibility for school improvement and in checking how well pupils are making progress. Some initiatives, such as the introduction of more vocational subjects, are quite recent but, as one manager typically said, subject leaders already feel 'rejuvenated and enabled' to play their part in taking the school forward. The school has good capacity to improve further.

The school knows itself well. It has shown that it can successfully tackle areas where it is comparatively weak. For example, English examination results in 2006 were much better than in 2005. The school knows that, although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are progressing in line with others, the support for them is not sufficiently well co-ordinated across all subjects or with outside agencies. Consequently, senior managers have begun to give a greater priority to this.

The school works hard to raise pupils' aspirations for their future and most go on into further education or training after age 16. Standards are good in the sixth form, despite its very small size and the rural isolation of the school.

Much of the credit for the rapidly improving standards must go to the teachers. They have followed advice on how to plan effective lessons and they make good use of information and communication technologies (ICT) to enhance learning. They are working together well to share good practice.

Technology college status has brought much needed extra resources to the school. These have been used well to help drive up standards and, for example, to improve the progress that boys make. Moreover, pupils are clear that using these technologies makes school more interesting. Everyone takes a technology subject at GCSE and pupils also apply their ICT skills in other subjects. The curriculum is still evolving, with the aim of providing a greater choice of vocational subjects.

There is a happy atmosphere in and around school. Behaviour is good. Pupils talk with confidence and they appreciate the increasing efforts being made to consider their views.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Education in the sixth form is satisfactory. Owing to the small numbers of students, the school is severely restricted in the facilities it can offer on the Howden site and recruitment suffers from competition with further education colleges. Nevertheless, teaching and standards are good. The curriculum operates satisfactorily within the

joint provision, but breadth and scope for enrichment activities are limited because of the need to travel. The opportunities for students' personal development, though adequate, are also constrained because of the small size. On the other hand, this gives rise to a close-knit community where students feel comfortable and make new friendships. There are good systems for tracking students' progress, setting targets, and advising on education or training when they leave. Management of the sixth form is satisfactory; the school provides what it can within budget constraints.

What the school should do to improve further

- Integrate the support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of the full range of pupils.
- Develop middle managers' responsibility and accountability further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is good. Pupils now make good progress. Standards have improved significantly in recent years and are now up to national average. Early indications from the 2006 tests and examinations suggest that standards have improved further. Pupils do particularly well in science, art and design and design and technology. Results in English were much better in 2006 than they were in 2005, following a concerted effort to focus on this. There has been considerable improvement generally in the performance of boys. Records show that some individual pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made good progress but there is no clear system for tracking the progress of these pupils overall. Pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory and their ICT skills are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are keen to succeed. They behave well in lessons and around school, and they say they enjoy its friendly atmosphere. Pupils' moral and social development is a substantial strength, but there are limited opportunities for spiritual enhancement and multi-cultural awareness. Attendance is average. Pupils make positive contributions to the school and its community, for example, through the popular 'Rock Challenge'. They take responsibility well as prefects or through the school council, where they know their views will be taken seriously. The school is working toward a Healthy School award. Pupils are helped to adopt a safe, healthy lifestyle and learn about related issues, including alcohol abuse and drug awareness. A growing number of pupils benefit from regular exercise through

involvement in extra-curricular sport at school, where there are good facilities and opportunities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned and ensure good progress. The strategies adopted over the last four years, particularly in the development of assessment, have improved the quality of lessons and raised attainment. Teachers have reacted positively to initiatives to improve and have taken leading roles in discussing and sharing good practice both within and across subject departments. They are now ready to look at how they could encourage pupils to be more independent in their learning and how to provide increased challenge, especially for the more able. Pupils are constantly aware of how they are doing and of the standards they are aiming for, through the good assessment process. Pupils keep a personal progress and target sheet for all subjects. They say that they are well taught.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It promotes pupils' development and achievement adequately. It is broad and balanced and expanding appropriately with the recent introduction of a wider range of vocational courses and work-related activities in Years 10 and 11. An alternative curriculum meets the needs of pupils considered to be at risk of underachieving, but there is no clear overview of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, nor how effective this is. A good transition programme helps pupils transfer smoothly from primary schools. The new pupils in Year 7 commented on how much this had helped them settle in. Opportunities for pupils to develop socially and culturally are enhanced by a range of extra-curricular and sporting activities and clubs. Despite transport difficulties, these activities flourish. Links with other schools and local industry are improving.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils are well cared for. Child protection procedures meet statutory requirements and plans for raising staff awareness are in place. The necessary health and safety checks are carried out and systems for risk assessment are thorough. Pupils are well known to staff and they say they feel safe and cared for in school. They trust adults to take their concerns seriously, and appreciate how issues such as bullying are dealt

with, should they arise. Pupils' progress is usually well monitored and their achievements are celebrated. Parents say they value the regular information they receive. Many pupils can explain how well they are meeting their targets, and know what they need to do to improve further. Pupils receive useful careers guidance. Support for vulnerable pupils and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money. Specialist college status has brought opportunities for teachers to develop their expertise and confidence to extend teaching methods. The strong senior management team, enthusiastically supported by the governors, fully recognises what still needs doing to ensure that every pupil receives a rich and high quality education. The impressive leadership of the newly appointed headteacher is raising staff morale to new heights and ensuring that everyone is fully committed to improving learning and teaching still further. New, rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are beginning to enable middle managers to take a more active role in moving the school forward.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 September 2006

To the school council

Howden School and Technology College

Derwent Road

Howden

Goole

East Yorkshire

DN14 7AL

Dear pupils

I am writing to thank you for your help in the recent inspection of your school and to tell you about our findings. We were able to talk to a number of you and to members of staff. We also read your parents' questionnaire responses and we visited some lessons.

We think Howden school is a good school, with a happy atmosphere and good teaching. Your parents agree strongly with this judgement. The school is well led and managed and the staff take great care to support and guide you. You told us that the school listens to your views. We think you have very positive attitudes to learning and you behave well.

The standard of your work is as we would expect to see compared to other schools nationally. We were particularly pleased to see how much your standards have improved in recent years. You are doing especially well in science, but also in art and design and your results in English were up significantly in 2006. Although the sixth form is very small, the standards here are good and it is a close knit group of young people who work well together.

Your new headteacher has lots of good ideas for the future and he has already made some changes. We have asked him to look at three things particularly:

- how the school organises the support for those of you who find learning difficult, in order to keep a closer eye on your progress
- getting the subject leaders more involved in how the school is run
- checking that the range of subjects on offer meets your needs well.

A lot of hard work lies behind your school's improvement, so – well done to everyone! Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's inspector