

Holly Lodge Foundation High School College of Science

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104018
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	336220
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Pritam Singh-Mander
Headteacher	Mr Ahson Mohammed
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2006
School address	Holly Lane Smethwick West Midlands
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of time looking at learning. This included observing 33 teachers, visiting 34 lessons and observing two assemblies. Three of the lessons were observed jointly with the senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of students, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, students' work, whole school and subject development plans, numerous policies and school documents. Completed questionnaires from 193 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- the barriers to progress for boys of below average ability, Pakistani students and students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are at the 'school action' stage of support
- the effectiveness of teaching literacy skills across the curriculum
- the quality of teaching and learning and, in particular, how effective teaching is in meetings the needs of different students
- how effectively the school's provision in relation to care, guidance and support meets the needs of all students and, especially, the needs of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the rigour of self-evaluation at all levels of leadership and management to monitor and improve its performance.

Information about the school

Holly Lodge Foundation High School College of Science is a larger than average secondary school. Around three quarters of students come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Over half of the students speak English as an additional language; of these a small number, which includes refugees and asylum seekers, are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Mobility rates are high, a fifth of the students join or leave the school after the start of year 7.

The school gained science college status in September 2004 and is a Leading Edge School. The new headteacher started in September 2009. There are 69 post-16 students at the school. Since September 2009, the school has operated a sixth form in franchise with Sandwell College where students are enrolled. The school has been part of the Black Country Challenge since 2008. The school has achieved several awards including the Healthy Schools and Quality mark for Careers Advice and Guidance.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Holly Lodge is judged to be a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Under the strong leadership of the new headteacher, the school has begun to successfully tackle a number of issues, such as improved support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and developing an increasingly stronger teaching profile. The tracking and monitoring of students' performance are rigorous and have led to continuous improvement in GCSE examination results. The current Year 11 students are on track to meet their targets and show improvement from previous results. Accurate self-evaluation by the school's leaders and the success of actions to improve students' outcomes indicate that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

The following are the particular strengths of the school.

Students learn in a supportive and inclusive environment where behaviour is good.

The school is a harmonious community with a strong ethos, which ensures that students from different backgrounds work well together, understand each others' cultures and support one another as members of Holly Lodge.

The quality of students' care, guidance and support is good.

There is a wide range of curriculum options available which are effective in meeting students' needs and aspirations. There are many strong partnerships with local schools, colleges and other agencies, all of which enhance the provision available for students.

The school's specialism in the sciences has had a significant impact on the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, and on assessment systems. Students' attainment in science is higher than compared with other subjects.

The headteacher has galvanised the staff, students and the community in a common vision of 'believing it can be done.' Staff are very proud and committed to improvement and know each student well.

Students enjoy school, feel safe and are well prepared for the next stages of their education or employment.

Aspects of the school's work that are less effective include the following.

Attainment and the progress students have been making have been improving steadily over recent years but there is more to be done to secure good achievement for all students.

Teaching and assessment are satisfactory: although much improved, they remain inconsistent. Not all teaching activities meet the needs of students sufficiently. While students know their target grades, the feedback teachers give them on their work does not always give sufficient guidance on how they can improve.

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The quality of planning, monitoring and evaluation undertaken by middle leaders is too variable and good practice is not yet embedded.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement by continuing to increase the proportion of good and better teaching across the school by:
 - embedding good practice so that all teachers learn from the outstanding teaching that exists in the school
 - ensuring lessons meet the needs of all groups and individuals
 - ensuring that feedback on students' work provides good quality advice and guidance about how to improve.
- Achieve consistency and improvement by strengthening the planning, monitoring and evaluation undertaken by middle leaders so that good practice is effectively modelled and shared.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the school with attainment which is well below average. Attainment in GCSE and equivalent examinations has remained low, although improving securely. The current performance of Year 11 shows that students' achievement will continue to improve. This is reflected in the success of early entry GCSE passes in English and mathematics. Improved use of performance data and the detailed individualised tracking of students show that the majority of students are now making the expected levels of progress. The progress of different groups is carefully tracked, with an increasing range of effective intervention strategies to remedy underachievement. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. The achievement of low attaining boys, Pakistani students and those identified as school action is a continuing priority for the school. Students have generally good attitudes to learning and enjoy their lessons. Students' progress and learning were satisfactory in most lessons seen and good in some. Learning is strongest in lessons where there is an element of independence for students, and collaborative learning alongside good advice and feedback on how to improve work.

Students learn in a supportive and inclusive environment and the majority report that they feel safe, recognising the improvements that have been made in this regard after the arrival of the new headteacher. Students say that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by the school's clear and effective recording. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Students are welcoming and courteous, showing a positive approach to one another and to their learning. There are high levels of participation in the weekly two hours of physical education, and a clear knowledge of healthy foods enables

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students to develop a strong sense of a healthy lifestyle. The school works effectively with a wide range of other agencies to support students' health and well-being.

Members of the elected school council take pride in their position. They feel that their suggestions and opinions are listened to, although not always acted upon, and they would welcome more opportunities to take responsibility. Students are well prepared for the next phase on their lives because of the work the school is doing to improve their skills. This is particularly the case in literacy, which has a whole school focus, but also in numeracy and information and communication technology. The school has a well-developed work experience programme for Year 11 students. Attendance is satisfactory but improving because of the rigorous systems and monitoring that the school has put in place. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory because the school provides a limited number of opportunities to engage students' curiosity about the world more broadly through a wider range of cultural activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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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The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and inspectors agree with the school's leaders that there is trend of secure improvement. This is evident through the amount of outstanding practice seen. The school has focused on raising achievement through the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and this has started to bear fruit. The good relationships between teachers and students ensure that there is an environment in which students can enjoy their lessons. Students work extremely well together when given the opportunity and, in some lessons, this gives rise to excellent collaborative learning. Although expectations of teaching and learning have been raised, good practice is still not seen in all lessons. Many teachers use assessment information to plan lessons which take account of students' capabilities and previous learning. When this happens, there is good challenge for all students. The less successful lessons lack pace, vigour and variety with insufficient focus on meeting the needs of different abilities and groups of students. Marking of work is satisfactory. There are some excellent examples in English and science but students are not routinely told how to move on to the next steps in their learning.

The school provides a good curriculum, which has many strengths. The awarding of specialist status has resulted in a broad offer of science subjects and students are able to start examination work in science in Year 9. The proportion of students who study three sciences in Key Stage 4 is above average. In French, pupils receive accreditation for their achievement at the end of Year 9. Since the last inspection, the school has gone a long way in providing accredited vocational courses for pupils in Key Stage 4. These match students' abilities and aspirations, and include several courses arranged in collaboration with outside providers. Many students enter the school in Year 7 with poor literacy skills. They now receive regular additional help through the literacy support programme. This is augmented by additional language activities in some registration periods. The curriculum is well supported by themed days and a wide range of visits and visiting experts.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Good transition arrangements for Year 7 pupils which are being further developed for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Effective strategies have supported the improvement of attendance. Leaders have a clear vision of further improving provision through innovative initiatives, such as the six week induction programme for students who speak English as an additional language. The school makes good use of the expertise provided by outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3 3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

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How effective are leadership and management?

The new headteacher provides a strong steer and direction, and in a short time has raised staff expectations and introduced rigour. There is renewed determination by senior and middle leaders in tackling the school's key priorities. Commitment is evident at all levels and staff morale is high. Detailed action plans for modern foreign languages and for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are leading to a quickened pace of improvement. Achievement shows an upward trend but the improvement from 2009 and 2010 is still relatively small. Middle leaders have welcomed recent opportunities to share and adopt good practice, and they have a good understanding of data and whole school priorities. A range of strategies including the use of external advanced skills teachers are supporting improvements in teaching. The impact of this work is not sufficiently embedded to reduce the wide variation in practice, and too much inconsistency remains in teaching, performance of departments and groups of students. Subject development plans lack precision, sufficient timelines and clear success criteria. Department reviews are not yet sufficiently rigorous. Science is an example of good practice, making a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, and in the rigour by which it monitors and evaluates its work.

The governing body is supportive to the school and discharges its statutory duties appropriately. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are closely involved in developments. Their involvement in the evaluation of the school's progress is not yet sufficiently widespread. All safeguarding arrangements are met; the school has very clear policies, strategies and procedures which rigorously ensure the safeguarding and welfare of students. The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers. There are good partnerships to promote students' learning and well-being. This is evident in curriculum links and care, guidance and support links with a wide range of external agencies.

The school models an active approach to the tackling of discrimination and the promotion of equality opportunities through its pastoral systems and its care and support of students. However, some groups do not progress at the same rate as others and levels of achievement reveal variations in performance. The same variations can be seen in the school's exclusion data. Community cohesion within the school itself is impressive and much work has been done with local community leaders and with the local police to improve relationships between different groups. This is having a positive impact within the school itself. The school is aware that it now needs to build upon this and, in particular, raise student's awareness of the global dimension.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	3

Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned was relatively low. The majority of parents and carers agreed that the school keeps their child safe and they enjoy school. A small minority expressed some disagreement about behaviour and other aspects of the school's work. The inspection team judged behaviour to be good; students themselves commented on the improvements since the arrival of the new headteacher. These improvements are not yet reflected sufficiently in parents' and carers' and carers views. The lead inspector had a detailed discussion with the headteacher about the results of the questionnaires to inform the school's future work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holly Lodge Foundation High School College of Science 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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 193 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1287 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	37	104	54	8	4	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	60	31	101	52	20	10	7	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	35	92	48	20	10	7	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	34	102	53	15	8	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	60	31	100	52	19	10	6	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	25	96	50	33	17	7	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	20	102	53	34	18	5	3
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)	54	28	99	52	21	11	8	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	18	120	51	25	13	8	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	26	96	62	30	16	11	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	12	111	58	30	16	13	7
The school is led and managed effectively	40	21	114	59	16	8	9	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	36	93	48	17	9	7	4

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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. 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 pupil's 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Holly Lodge Foundation High School College of Science, Smethwick B67 7JG

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about the school. The school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education overall and some areas are good. Since the new headteacher has arrived, you have noticed a number of improvements.

You learn in a supportive and inclusive environment where behaviour is good.

The school is a harmonious community where students from different backgrounds work well together.

The quality of care, guidance and support you receive is good.

There is a wide range of curriculum options available to you, which meet your needs.

There are many strong partnerships with local schools, colleges and other agencies.

The school's specialism in the sciences is a real strength of the school. You achieve well in science when compared with other subjects.

The headteacher and the senior leadership have provided new direction and enthusiasm to the staff, students and the community in a common vision of 'believing it can be done.' Staff are very proud and committed to improvement.

You enjoy school, feel safe and are well prepared for the next stages of your education or employment.

We have asked the school to make the following improvements.

Increase the frequency of good or outstanding teaching to raise achievement.

Share the good practice already in the school amongst leaders, managers and teachers.

We wish you all the very best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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