

Henley in Arden High School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136991
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	385561
Inspection dates	11–12 January 2012
Lead inspector	Rashida Sharif 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	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gordan Cutler
Headteacher	Paul Wright
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
School address	Stratford Road Henley-in-Arden B95 6AF
Telephone number	01564 792364
Fax number	01564 792411
Email address	admin@henleyschool.com

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Rashida Sharif HMI

Lead inspector

Gillian Smith

Additional inspector

David Wolfson

Additional inspector

Glen Goddard

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. Inspectors observed 33 teachers teaching 33 lessons, of which five were joint observations with members of the senior team. In addition, they observed the school's work and looked at data on students' progress, a range of policies and planning documents, the school's self-evaluation, the single central record of safeguarding checks of staff, minutes of the governing body. The inspection team observed the provision of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the governing body. The team analysed questionnaires returned by 289 parents and carers, 84 students and 45 staff and took account of 'Parent View' in planning the inspection. Meetings were held with three groups of students.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average secondary school with specialist status for performing arts. Students are predominantly of White British heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the percentage of students who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The school exceeds the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school converted to an academy in August 2011. It has gained a number of awards, including Sportsmark, Eco-schools and Arts gold award.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- Henley in Arden is a satisfactory school. Attainment overall is in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 4. The progress of different groups is satisfactory, with some indications of a gradual improvement, especially for boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teaching is improving to enable students to make good progress. Some outstanding lessons were seen which provide examples of good practice for the school to build on. Nonetheless, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in mathematics and science, hinder many students in making the best progress they are capable of. The school is more effective in supporting students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. As a result, these students are now beginning to make good progress.
- The behaviour of students observed by the inspection team in lessons and around the school was seen to be generally good. They are courteous, friendly and helpful. However, a significant minority of those parents and students who responded to the questionnaires raised some concerns about behaviour particularly in lessons. Despite this, both indicated that poor behaviour if and when it occurs is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students from different backgrounds get on well together.
- Respect for the headteacher is evident in the questionnaires returned by students, staff and parents. Senior leaders and managers are appropriately deployed to ensure priorities for improvement are implemented as planned. Senior staff and the governing body know the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is some inconsistency in how systematically and analytically leaders, including middle leaders, use the information gathered from self-evaluation to help raise performance when compared to the national averages.
- Performance management is being used well to improve the quality of teaching. Where teaching is not good enough effort is made to remedy this.

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 school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress made by students in their academic work by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching consistently matches the best in the school, especially in mathematics and science
 - providing more precise feedback in all lessons to help all students make the progress they are capable of
 - ensuring that students are given opportunities to work independently as well as in groups
 - ensuring lessons proceed at a good pace and use a range of teaching styles so that all students are fully engaged
 - ensuring all teachers take greater responsibility for students writing accurately in the subjects they teach.

- Ensure all leaders and managers use the information gathered from self-evaluation more systematically and analytically, in order to:
 - gain a more accurate picture of the school's performance when compared to national averages, so as to further focus the school's actions for improvement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment has kept pace with the national average since the previous inspection. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 recovered after a dip in 2010. In 2011 unvalidated data shows that the proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 4 rose to above the national average. In lessons seen during the inspection and from the information available from the school's assessment system, students' progress continues to be broadly satisfactory although much emerging good practice was observed. For example, assessment information is used to identify and provide targeted support that engages student interest. In these lessons students are keen to learn and work hard both independently and in groups. Boys continue to perform less well than girls, as do those of middle ability. There are indications of a gradual increase in the rate of some students' progress, especially in Year 10 and 11, but progress in other year groups varies, depending on the quality of teaching.

One of the school's strengths is its inclusive approach to supporting students, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other complex needs. Targeted pastoral and academic support for students with emotional and social needs enables them to make progress in line with their peers. This is endorsed by the majority of the parents who responded to the inspection questionnaires.

Quality of teaching

The school has very rightly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has resulted in a steady increase in the proportion of good and outstanding lessons since the school's last inspection. However, the quality of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently good to ensure that all students make consistently good progress, for example in mathematics and science. The inconsistency in quality is especially apparent in the mixed and some lower-ability sets because teachers do not always plan their lessons precisely to meet these students' different learning needs, preventing overall achievement from being better than satisfactory.

In the good and outstanding lessons, students are highly motivated, learn independently and work collaboratively because tasks are varied, well-structured and relevant. Learning objectives are specific to meet the range of abilities, and focus on developing students' comprehension and communication skills well. Consequently students, including boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are engaged in their learning. Teachers apply their good subject knowledge to pose challenging questions around social issues and moral dilemmas. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students were encouraged to learn in depth through discussion and debate, how a poet and artist used colour and symbolism to deliver a complex view of right and wrong and good and evil. The tasks are well structured and resources are used well to enthuse and engage students. Relationships are good between staff and students and amongst students. Marking and feedback on students' work are precisely focused on how to achieve higher levels or grades. In these lessons, teaching assistants are effectively deployed alongside students who require additional support. Responses from students and parents and carers to the inspection questionnaires support the view that their child is taught well and is making good progress.

In the less effective lessons, teachers have a tendency to talk too long with over-lengthy explanations that are repetitive, hindering students in engaging in their learning. The lessons are over-directed so that the whole class stops and starts together, regardless of whether it needs to or not, leading some students to become restless. Teaching assistants are not always well deployed and are not able to work with students while the teacher is talking. Although all teachers are specialist in their subjects and subject specific vocabulary is highlighted in plans, opportunities are missed to develop writing skills in different subjects. Consequently the progress that the students are capable of is slowed down leading some to occasionally become frustrated.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students who completed the questionnaires and those that inspectors spoke with say they feel safe and that if any bullying were to occur it is dealt with swiftly. They know who to go to if they have any concerns. The school's pastoral support is its strength. This is confirmed by the vast majority of parents and carers. In most of the lessons and around the school most students behave well. However, in some lessons observed there was some low-level disruption, such as a few students continually talking when the teachers were responding to questions raised by other students. This was reflected in the views of a significant minority of parents and carers, and

students who returned the inspection questionnaires disagreeing that behaviour was good in lessons. However, a very small number of students from across the age range who are noted to have difficulties in managing their own behaviour are supported well by the inclusion team. Fixed-term and permanent exclusions rates have declined since the last inspection. There have been no recorded incidents of bullying or racism. No incidents of inappropriate racist behaviour were observed by the inspection team during the two days of the inspection.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, the senior leadership and the governing body know what the school needs to do to improve further. The focus on professional development, and good partnership work with parents, carers and external agencies have combined well to ensure that equality and diversity are addressed through the school's inclusive community. The focus on teaching and learning has enabled the work to be monitored and evaluated more regularly. However, senior leaders' judgments regarding the quality of teaching and learning did not always match those of the inspection team. As a consequence of all these and other aspects of leadership and management, improvements are beginning to emerge, particularly in raising overall achievement and in the performance of boys, indicating the school has the capacity to continue to improve. The governing body holds senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance including ensuring that all safeguarding arrangements are in place. It has an accurate view of the school's performance.

The system for tracking individual students over their time in the school secures a clear picture of their progress at an individual level. Senior leaders use this information appropriately to regularly check with teachers how individual students are progressing toward their targets. However, some middle leaders' understanding of the process of analysing the attainment and progress of groups of students in relation to national expectations are underdeveloped. Consequently some middle leaders do not have an accurate enough picture of the school's overall performance when compared to national expectations.

The curriculum is good because the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is promoted well through planned opportunities to offer a variety of experiences. For example, the performing arts and the English department liaise well to increase levels of participation in dance, drama and music. This is further enhanced through, for example, the school's performing arts curriculum which extends into the local and wider community. Students take leadership roles and participate in decision making, both in the school and in the wider community. Students in years 10 and 11 play an active role as mentors in creating a harmonious and supportive community for students in Years 7 and 8. Students speak well of the school particularly in how they are valued and are proud to show off their numerous achievement badges.

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 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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 school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.

13 January 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of Henley in Arden School, Henley-in-Arden, B95 6AF

Thank you very much for your help during our visit. We found what you had to say very interesting and helpful in making our judgments about your school. We enjoyed observing many of you in lessons and talking with you about what you thought about the school. We read the questionnaires that some of you and your parents and carers completed. As a result of the inspection, we judged Henley in Arden to be a satisfactory school.

Some of the good things we found were as follows.

- Quite a few of your lessons are interesting and in these you make good progress.
- Your behaviour around the school is generally good but in the questionnaires that some of you and your parents and carers you completed told us that some students disrupt lessons and misbehave - we looked closely at this and we found that although a few students occasionally misbehave in lessons this is handled well by your teachers.
- The school looks after you well and most of you told us that you feel safe.
- Many of you told us how much you appreciate the help and guidance that your teachers give you.
- We were impressed with the range of opportunities you were given and to see so many of you willingly take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly the performing arts and sports.

We did find some things that need improving. We held discussions with the headteacher, staff and the governing body about these. They are going to work to:

- make sure that all of you do well in your academic work by making sure that more lessons match the best in the school, especially in mathematics and science
- make sure that all leaders and managers use the information gathered from self-evaluation more systematically and analytically to make more of the improvements that are necessary.

You too can help by attending school more regularly and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif
Her Majesty's Inspector

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