



Hyde Technology School and Hearing Impaired Resource Base

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106268
Local Authority Tameside
Inspection number 287461
Inspection date 30 November 2006
Reporting inspector Leszek Iwaskow HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Old Road
School category	Community		Hyde
Age range of pupils	11–16		Cheshire SK14 4SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3681353
Number on roll (school)	882	Fax number	0161 3685099
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr C Daly
		Headteacher	Mrs Denise Spence
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–16	30 November 2006	287461

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hyde Technology School is an average sized, mixed 11 to 16 comprehensive school. There has been a steady decline in numbers since the last inspection due to the building of a new school nearby and changes in admission boundaries. Many students come from areas of social and economic disadvantage. Pupil aspirations are often low. The overall level of attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below the national level and many pupils have poorly developed literacy skills. Almost 3 in 10 pupils are entitled to free school meals and 1 in 5 come from minority ethnic backgrounds, almost exclusively Bangladeshi. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, although those with statements of special educational need are broadly in line. Pupil mobility is low. Attendance is slightly below the national average. The school attained Specialist Technology status in 1996. The school is a centre for students with hearing impairment, with eight students attached to the resource base.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

This is a complex and diverse school with many sharp contrasts. There are some areas where provision can be judged to be very good and even outstanding. However, there are other areas in which provision is inadequate. Very good exam results are attained in some areas, especially vocational subjects. The efforts made by the school to raise standards in mathematics and English are beginning to bear fruit with the best ever results recorded this year. In contrast, performance in science remains inadequate.

There is no doubt that in many respects the school serves its pupils well. The majority enjoy coming to school and are proud of their achievements and many more are now staying on in full time education past the age of 16. They have much to be proud of. Most want to make the most of the opportunities offered, although they need to become more confident in their own abilities and raise their horizons.

Pupils are welcoming and keen to create a good impression. Behaviour is improving, although a small minority still spoil things through disruptive behaviour in some classes. This occurs particularly in those lessons where poor teaching fails to gain the pupils' interest or responds to their needs. Equally, they react more positively in those lessons where teaching is good and where the curriculum is relevant. For example, in a good Year 7 Spanish lesson both boys and girls took great delight in participating and developing their vocabulary through a series of well organised word games. When they remembered and pronounced words such as 'gordo', 'viejo' and 'pequeno' correctly they visibly burst with pride.

Pupils appreciate when teachers have made the effort to make their learning special. They talk with fondness about trips to museums, the battlefields in Belgium and France or the opportunities to experience the atmosphere and culture of the Christmas market in Cologne. Others have had their eyes opened by the business studies trip to New York. Unfortunately not all subjects make the most of the many opportunities available to bring learning to life.

Pupils also benefit from the school's specialist technology status with especially good access to computers. Most are confident users of new technology. However, poor attendance remains an issue in some classes and impacts negatively on learning. The school prides itself on the support it offers for those pupils in most need.

Whilst many subjects are providing a good quality experience for the pupils, provision and management remains inadequate in some areas, notably science, the humanities and citizenship. If governors and senior management drive through the necessary improvements, the school can have a bright future and will be able to move into the new proposed buildings with optimism and confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' performance and progress in science.
- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in science and the humanities, to ensure it is consistently good throughout the school.
- Make management at all levels more accountable in order to ensure provision is good in all areas.
- Raise attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils start school with below average levels of attainment. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards are broadly average and have been so for the past five years. In contrast, at Key Stage 4, standards have risen strongly over the same period and are above the national average for five A* to C passes. This positive picture is partly due to pupils' great success in vocational courses, such as GNVQ information and communication technology (ICT). Standards are also rising in English and mathematics and have reached the national average in both. Outside of these subjects, standards are much more variable. In particular, the pass rate in science at GCSE is exceptionally low.

There is a contrasting picture of progress in the school. Overall, pupils seem to make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and outstanding progress at Key Stage 4 apart from in science. Notably there is little variation in the progress of different groups of pupils at either key stage. Boys and girls, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and minority ethnic pupils perform equally well in relation to their starting points. The inadequate progress made by pupils in science by the end of Key Stage 4 remains a major concern. Taking account of this very weak performance in a core subject across two key stages over a number of years, pupils' overall achievement can only be judged to be satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with several good features. Most pupils develop into sensible and mature young adults by the time they leave school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They develop a good understanding of the cultural diversity of their community and the school's moral code. However, opportunities to develop spirituality remain limited and at Key Stage 4, in particular, the programme for citizenship is poorly developed and does little to enhance personal development in a progressive way. Pupils appreciate the clarity and the rewards attached to a new behaviour policy. They remark that behaviour is clearly improving, although it is undermined in some lessons by a small minority of disruptive pupils.

Most pupils enjoy school reasonably well and they say they feel safe. This is reflected in improving attendance, which is now close to the national average. However, this

hides the below average attendance in Year 9 and Year 10, which undermines the continuity of learning. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to keep healthy and stay fit due to several recent high-profile initiatives. The school provides good quality healthy food options but pupils remarked that they often eat less healthily outside the school environment. The school's specialist technology status ensures that links with the world of work are used productively. The good progress being made in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and especially ICT, prepares pupils well for their future careers.

Pupils are willing to take on responsibility. The school acknowledges that it needs to tap into this enthusiasm by making the school council a more effective vehicle for pupil participation and encourage a greater involvement with the wider school community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Although a number of good and outstanding lessons were observed, there were also those which were judged inadequate. Teaching is especially weak in science and the humanities. Weak lessons are characterised by a failure to engage pupils productively, poor questioning, too much teacher talk and too little pupil involvement. Some lessons are also disrupted through the poor behaviour of a minority of students. In sharp contrast, in an outstanding English lesson, pupils were enjoying the opportunities to work collaboratively as they studied the appropriately named play 'An Inspector Calls'. Here the teacher posed questions rather than gave answers and allowed the pupils opportunities to explore the complex personalities of the various characters. Pupils remarked that they particularly enjoyed those lessons where they could work practically.

The school is also making effective use of new technology to enhance many lessons and the pupils enjoy the frequent opportunities to use computers for research or to apply their good computer skills.

Marking varies across the school. Some teachers fail to mark books on a regular basis. Others provide accurate and relevant feedback which enables pupils to reflect on their performance and provide clear direction on how they can improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is satisfactory. Improvements have been made since the last inspection to make the curriculum less restrictive. It is now better balanced with improved time provision for the humanities and religious education. There is also greater choice at Key Stage 4 and the increasing wide range of vocational subjects is better suited to the needs of many pupils. The plans to promote a more personalised curriculum will further benefit pupils in the future. It should also ensure that the gifted

and talented pupils, in particular, make more appropriate choices to raise their aspirations and reflect their abilities.

The school prides itself in promoting healthy lifestyles but the time allocated for physical education is less than the recommended minimum. A range of sporting opportunities is also available after school as well as on Saturday mornings but could be better supported by more pupils. The teaching of citizenship does not meet statutory requirements, especially at Key Stage 4 where insufficient time is made available within the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme to deliver the course effectively. Pupils' access to enrichment opportunities outside the classroom varies from subject to subject and is often dependent on which they opt for at examination level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect is satisfactory with several good features. Whilst care and support are good, the guidance given to pupils on how to improve their work is only satisfactory. The school embraces the idea that 'Every Child Matters'. This is reflected in the success of the school in promoting the achievement of all groups of pupils in its community. Vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (especially those with hearing impairment) and bi-lingual pupils are given good support. Pupils and parents talk very positively, in particular, about the help offered by the Alpha Centre. A new behaviour management strategy is showing success in keeping pupils engaged who are at risk of exclusion. Child protection regulations are fully observed and health and safety procedures are given high priority. Pupils say there are few incidents of bullying and any are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are confident they have someone to turn to if they are troubled.

The school is strengthening the systems it uses for setting targets and tracking the progress of pupils. There are good features to this system for pupils in Year 11 and there are plans to extend this process to Year 9. However, there is no consistent and progressive monitoring across all year groups. Whilst pupils know their targets, these are often too general. Pupils say that they would like clearer, more specific targets for learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Given the issues that remain to be addressed and the wide variations in performance and provision across subjects, leadership and management at all levels can only be judged to be satisfactory. The headteacher is aware that more needs to be done to improve performance in certain areas and especially in science. Although support has been in place for sometime, progress in improving provision in science has been too slow.

There are good systems in place to enable curriculum leaders to review and monitor progress in their subjects. But, this is not being used consistently and with sufficient rigour to drive through improvements across the whole curriculum. The quality of subject leadership varies. Where subjects are well managed, there is a shared responsibility, good communication, a clear sense of direction and good outcomes. Where teachers and middle managers are innovative and effective this has led to clear improvements, although greater efforts need to be made to share good classroom practice. Most heads of department are committed and intent on raising standards. Others lack the ability or the inclination to identify weaknesses or challenge poor practice. Governance is satisfactory. Line managers and governors need to be more proactive in challenging teaching and management where it is poor.

The current building and amenities have their shortcomings. Some classrooms are small and cramped and make teaching difficult. Toilet provision is unsatisfactory and a major source of complaint from pupils. The library is inadequate and rarely used. The school and pupils will benefit from the proposed new build in the near future.

The majority of parents are generally appreciative of the efforts being made to make their children's experience rewarding as well as enjoyable, although concerns were expressed about disruptive behaviour in some lessons and performance in some subjects.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

I enjoyed visiting your school recently and would like to thank you for all your help. You are very proud of your school and are very supportive and appreciative of the way Mrs Spence and your teachers are working hard to make your time at the school an enjoyable and successful experience. You also suggested a number of ways in which things could be even better.

You, your parents and your teachers have much to be proud of. Many of you do very well in your examinations, although you still need to do better in science. The teachers are also keen to help you to improve in this area. You especially like those lessons which allow you to work together and in which you can participate practically. You appreciate when the teachers take you out of the school; for example, to visit the Christmas market in Manchester or the theatre and especially when they take you abroad. You would like more opportunities to learn outside the classroom whether through vocational courses in a workplace or through educational visits and sporting opportunities.

You also enjoy using computers and are able to do so very well. Unfortunately, a few of you misbehave and disrupt some lessons. This makes it difficult for your teachers to teach and your friends to learn. Together, with a little effort on all sides, you and your teachers can make your lessons better and more enjoyable. Most of you look forward to coming to school and rarely miss a day, but some of you have far too much time off. This makes it more difficult for you to get good grades in your exams. If you set your sights high enough you can be successful and achieve what you want to achieve.

You would like to have a greater say in improving your school and Mrs Spence intends to make the school council a more effective body where you can voice your opinions, put forward suggestions and make a real difference to the life of the school. I am very aware that the buildings you work in are old and cramped and at times this makes learning difficult. When you eventually move into your new premises, you will have a building to truly match your potential and which you fully deserve.