

Huddersfield Grammar School

Independent School

Inspection report

DCSF Registration Number	3826005
Unique Reference Number	107786
Inspection number	318624
Inspection dates	12 - 13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie AI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

Huddersfield Grammar School is a selective independent day school for pupils from 3 to 16 years of age, irrespective of race, religion, gender or background. It was founded in 1995, based on the traditions of two former independent schools. It aims to give all pupils opportunities to use their unique talents to achieve success, to find learning enjoyable, stimulating and well ordered with the opportunity for self-expression. There are currently 457 pupils on roll. This is its first inspection.

Evaluation of the school

Huddersfield Grammar School provides a good quality of education. Good teaching promotes very high standards by the age of 16, and good progress throughout the school, which prepare students very well for the next stage of their education and their future economic well-being. The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities to enable all pupils to succeed, particularly in their personal development. The school succeeds in its aims because of the high quality of relationships it fosters. Behaviour is outstanding throughout the school. The great majority of pupils enjoy being at the school and many make a valuable contribution to its daily life. The school meets all the regulations.

Quality of education

The curriculum provision in all the phases of the school is good. It is well planned and is sufficiently wide in coverage to give all pupils a rich diet of appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. The subject matter of the courses of study is fully appropriate for the ages and aptitudes of all the pupils at the school. The curriculum allows pupils to make good progress. Through a range of different curriculum courses the pupils across all phases are given good provision for personal development. The curriculum is implemented through the means of detailed, sequential and well-structured schemes of work which are effectively monitored for coverage.

A strength of the curriculum is the routine emphasis on the core subjects of literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology (ICT). The school's documentation provides parents and carers with sound and adequate information on the curriculum. The pupils also benefit from a programme of extra-curricular activities although these are mainly confined to sporting and music related

experiences. The Busy Bees Club provides support for literacy and numeracy in the pre-preparatory school.

Careers education forms part of the personal, social and health education course (PSHE); pupils in their final year at the school have individual interviews with advisors from the local Connexions office. The curriculum facilitates an easy and seamless transfer from one educational phase to the next.

Teaching and assessment are good. Teaching is closely related to the National Curriculum. It is well planned and delivered with good pace by teachers with good subject skills. It enables pupils, from Kindergarten to the senior school, to make good progress and to reach very high standards by the end of their schooling. In a significant minority of lessons, pupils engage in too little independent learning, although they demonstrate good skills in paired and group work when given the opportunity. Pupils make good progress because of the excellent relationships in the classroom and their own outstanding behaviour. They are committed to their tasks, concentrate well and follow instructions accurately. Boys and girls, and pupils of all ethnic groups make good progress. None has English as an additional language. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) make good progress because of the individual attention they receive in small classes. However, the use of assessment to inform planning for their individual needs is not yet well developed. Pupils with LDD do not have individual education plans (IEP) to accelerate their progress. Classroom resources are good, particularly the interactive white boards (IWB) which are well used by teachers and enthuse pupils.

Marking is of good quality and pupils and students appreciate how it helps them to improve. Teachers assess work efficiently but use a range of different methods, resulting in an inconsistent approach across the school. Target setting is not yet in place.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with outstanding features. Pupils' spiritual experience is good and enhanced through assemblies and religious education. Music and skilful story-telling with moments for reflection result in assemblies that are meaningful and uplifting. Spiritual awareness is promoted effectively through the curriculum, for example in the senior school, pupils experienced wonder when they investigated sound wave patterns in a science lesson.

The importance of understanding right and wrong behaviour is emphasised very successfully in assemblies and whenever necessary during the school day. As a result, behaviour is outstanding throughout the school. The ethos of the school promotes fairness and justice and the staff are good role models. The atmosphere in classes is one of friendly cooperation between the pupils themselves and with their teachers. The vast majority state that they enjoy their time in school.

The pupils learn about public institutions from an early age when they find out about 'people who help us' such as the police and fire fighters, and through citizenship and PSHE as they move through the school.

Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils celebrate all Christian festivals and those of other world faiths such as Islam and Judaism. The range of faiths brought into the school by pupils is valued greatly. In a citizenship lesson, pupils from a range of cultural heritages worked well together on a central theme of charity. Recently, the pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoyed Chinese New Year. A parent brought in interesting artefacts which made the festival come alive for the pupils.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is good. Policies are in place to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying. This results in an orderly and welcoming environment for learning. Staff supervision of the youngest children, in particular, ensures that they learn and play safely. Policies ensure that health and safety procedures are carefully followed, including risk assessment for groups of pupils on visits and activities out of school. Fire prevention procedures and testing of portable electrical appliances are fully up to date. Two members of staff have received appropriate training to act as child protection officers. The school has produced a three-year plan to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

Recruitment procedures are very thorough. All staff are required to confirm their identity, medical fitness and qualifications prior to confirmation of their appointment. All those working in the school, including members of the proprietorial body and staff supplied by contractors, have enhanced clearance from the criminal records bureau (CRB). All these details are held confidentially on a single central register.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is housed in a group of buildings in the grounds of a magnificent Victorian house, which is used for administration, the Kindergarten and two Reception classes. A recent fire destroyed two classrooms which have been temporarily replaced by mobile classrooms pending permanent replacement and extended facilities on the site of the former rooms. This is planned to increase access for pupils with disabilities. There is extensive play space, much of it grassed. Although some classrooms are small, they are adequate for the numbers of pupils and do not restrict the delivery of the curriculum. The buildings are maintained in a clean and well appointed state throughout.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school's prospectuses include a statement of the school's ethos. They also give clear information about the school, its curriculum and its policy on admissions, discipline and exclusions. Through contacts with parents and the school's newsletter, 'The Grapevine', parents are informed of how to request other important information. Twice a year, the school provides parents with high quality reports on pupils' progress.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's procedures for handling complaints fully meet requirements. There have been no formal complaints in the last year.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- continue to develop consistent whole school assessment policy and practice to inform planning and target setting to promote further progress for all pupils
- develop provision for pupils with LDD, particularly by introducing individual education plans.

School details

Name of school	Huddersfield Grammar School		
DCSF number	3826005		
Unique reference number	107786		
Type of school	Selective		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1995		
Age range of pupils	3-16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 231	Girls: 226	Total: 457
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 1	Girls: 0	Total: 1
Annual fees (day pupils)	£3,087 to £6,429		
Address of school	Royds Mount Luck Lane Marsh Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD1 4QX		
Telephone number	01484 424549		
Fax number	01484 531835		
Email address	admin@huddersfield-grammarschool.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mrs J L Straughan		
Proprietor	Cognita Schools Ltd		
Reporting inspector	Peter McKenzie AI		
Dates of inspection	12 - 13 February 2008		