

Hadleigh High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124795
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	328215
Inspection dates	17–18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Seath HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	804
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Marilyn Watsham
Headteacher	Mrs Cathy Tooze
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
School address	High Lands Road Hadleigh Ipswich Suffolk IP7 5HU
Telephone number	01473 823496
Fax number	01473 824720

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Hadleigh High School is a smaller than average school for students aged 11 to 16. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of ethnic minority heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is broadly average. The school has specialist science status.

The school has on-site childcare that is not provided by the governing body, but by another organisation. This is inspected and reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hadleigh High School is a good school. Care, guidance and support and the curriculum are outstanding features of the school's provision. Stronger leadership and management have contributed to considerable improvements since the school's last inspection. Students make generally good progress and attain high standards. Students leave the school with very good GCSEs. The proportion who attain five or more at grades A* to C is well above the national average and has improved steadily since the last inspection. Girls attain higher standards than boys, though the gap narrowed in the 2008 examination results. The school's specialist status in science has contributed to rising standards in that subject. In addition, teachers of science and mathematics are sharing good practice and this is strengthening teaching and learning in mathematics. The school enjoys a good reputation locally.

Teaching and learning are good. In most classes, teachers have high expectations so that students are helped to learn effectively. The school has improved the use of targets and assessment so that most students have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. However, there are differences in the consistency with which homework is set and marked across the school. Planning for lessons is good, but is not always implemented effectively so that all students, including the more able, are challenged. Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy in classes other than mathematics and English are often missed. Progress in lessons is good overall.

Personal development and well-being are good. Students enjoy their time at school and feel safe. Behaviour is generally good and bullying is rare. Students make valuable contributions to the local community and support each other well. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and participate extensively in sport. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school works very well with a wide range of external agencies to ensure it responds effectively to the needs of students. Those at risk of underachieving receive excellent support. Parents speak highly of the support and care which their children receive.

The curriculum has developed very well since the last inspection and it is now outstanding. It caters excellently for the needs of different groups so that they can achieve well. In collaboration with other institutions, the school's vocational curriculum has expanded markedly to the benefit of students. Students enjoy an excellent range of extra-curricular activities including clubs, visits and sport, and participation rates are high.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives good leadership with a clear direction and focus on the improvement of standards. Decisive intervention has led to improvements in a number of curriculum areas, notably mathematics. Although some self-evaluations are over stated, rigour in the process is improving providing a good basis for improvement. The use of challenging targets has successfully raised standards since the last inspection. The school has excellent links with other educational institutions and good partnership working which has enabled the development of an outstanding curriculum. Rigorous monitoring and searching analysis of data by leaders at all levels has led to consistent improvement since the last inspection and contributes to the school's outstanding capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching and marking stimulate and challenge all students, and in particular the more able, to achieve their best.
- Ensure that opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills are fully exploited in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Standards achieved by students in some subjects are outstanding and have shown consistent improvement. Students enter the school in Year 7, with attainment that is generally above average. At Key Stage 3, they attain high standards, well above the national average. Overall, students at Key Stage 3 perform in line with expectations given their starting points.

At Key Stage 4, standards are high, and for many subjects, for example, the school's science specialism, is outstanding. Since the last inspection, standards have improved at a rate significantly higher than national improvement. Students generally make good progress given their starting points, and this was confirmed during classroom observations. However, while overall their rate of progress declined in 2007, pass rates for 2007 at GCSE were significantly above the national average for schools of this type with 61% of students achieving five or more at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English. This proportion increased further in 2008.

The school has recently introduced a well-structured system to give students both challenging targets and accurate indications of progress towards them. The school's own data indicate that most students met these targets in 2008 and that performance is improving further as a result. At both Key Stage 3 and 4, students who find learning more difficult and those eligible for free school meals make good progress. In 2007, the proportion of boys achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C was below that for girls, though it remained above the national average. This gap narrowed in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Most students enjoy school and attendance is slightly above average because procedures to promote attendance are rigorous. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They demonstrate a particularly good awareness of cultural diversity and make thoughtful and mature contributions in discussions about moral issues. Behaviour in communal areas and outside is good. Students move around safely and show consideration for others. They are polite, friendly and show respect for the feelings of others. Bullying and racism are rare and students say they feel safe. The behaviour of a few students in a minority of lessons is unsatisfactory on occasions and some parents are concerned about this. Students develop an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, demonstrated by their participation in the extensive range of sporting activities offered and their healthy food choices. They are well aware of issues related to sex, drugs and smoking.

Students are very keen to take on responsibilities. They make a valuable contribution to the school and local communities. They organise and take part in successful fund-raising activities

and older students willingly support younger ones. The high standards achieved by students, combined with the ability to work cooperatively, ensure they are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection. In the very best lessons, teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and have high expectations of students leading to good or outstanding achievement in tests and examinations. In these classes, there is a high level of challenge so students progress and enjoy their learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to test understanding and develop learning and to allow students to reflect. Lessons are planned with a range of interesting activities, focused learning objectives and success criteria that help students to make the good progress observed. Teachers and students value the good work of teaching assistants.

Since the last inspection, the leadership team has introduced systems to ensure that assessment data and challenging targets are used effectively to help students to achieve. The school's own data indicate improvements in 2008 as a result. Teachers demonstrate an awareness of individual learning styles. In these lessons, students work well both individually and cooperatively in groups, and are aware of the steps they need to take to improve. The school's emphasis on creativity and challenge helps students to develop their personal and thinking skills. Most teachers have excellent relationships with students, which creates a positive climate for learning.

There are sometimes missed opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills in the delivery of lessons. Assessment is used to good effect and the majority of students are clear about both their progress and what they need to do to improve. However, the setting and marking of homework is inconsistent in a minority of subjects.

Planning in nearly all lessons acknowledges the wide range of students' needs in each class. However, in practice, some teachers do not follow the plans carefully enough with the result that not all students, including the more able, make the progress of which they are capable. Where learning and therefore progress is less effective, activities in the lesson do not challenge and engage students. On occasions, there are too few opportunities for students to work independently and collaboratively and some become disengaged. In a minority of lessons, this causes some to lose interest and the disruptive behaviour of a small number of students, notably boys, has an impact on the progress of all students in the class.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is now outstanding showing marked improvement since the last inspection. Students enjoy their education and feel that their teachers are firmly committed to helping them achieve. Strong emphasis is given to developing independent learners and the pattern of option choices is planned according to student requirements and interests. The curriculum caters excellently for the needs of different groups, including those who find learning more difficult. Careful checks are made to ensure they are progressing and developing well. The much-improved range of resources resulting from the school's specialist status, especially computers, has had a positive impact across the curriculum.

The school provides entry-level literacy and numeracy for the small number for whom it is appropriate. There are many opportunities for students across the age range to take on responsibilities in the community, for example as subject and sports captains. They are well prepared for their future economic well-being, and work experience placements are closely matched to students' interests and future aspirations. The school has developed a comprehensive range of vocational courses, which enable those students who undertake them to achieve well. The school works very hard to ensure that the provision of education for safety, health and well-being is comprehensive across all subjects. Students benefit from an excellent and varied programme of enrichment activities, including sport, performing arts and a range of clubs linked to curriculum areas. Participation in these is high; students enjoy them, and speak very positively about the commitment and encouragement they receive from their teachers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are excellent. Arrangements for safeguarding students are secure. The school complies with requirements for child protection and race relations and promotes equality of opportunity well. Parents appreciate the very effective induction procedures that help Year 7 students to settle quickly into the school. Students feel safe and there is always someone to turn to if they need help. The school works very well with external support agencies and makes very good use of their advice to support students with a very wide range of individual needs. Vulnerable students and those at risk of underachieving are identified early and receive excellent support. As a result, they achieve well. Very effective systems are in place to support the significant number of students from HM forces families who may arrive at any time of the year. The inclusion team are successful in reducing the number of students who are excluded and help them to develop their social skills and coping strategies. In addition, they support students who find coursework difficult and help them improve their examination results. Students' academic progress is very thoroughly monitored and ensures that students know how well they are doing and how to improve. It also helps the school to identify quickly most of the students making insufficient progress so they can target them for well-chosen support matched to their needs. Many parents speak highly of the support that their children receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides a clear direction and senior staff and the school community support her. The school strives for continuous improvement so that students can achieve their best. Staff feel well supported and communications are good at all levels. The school's good or outstanding provision has ensured that standards have continued to rise, although the rate at which students progress has been variable. Good progress has been made to address the issues identified in the last inspection, and the use of management information to set challenging targets is now good although the monitoring of progress against them is sometimes incomplete, especially at subject level. Quality assurance systems are generally good and improving. However on occasion they lack the necessary precision to achieve consistency.

Targets for improvement are appropriate and challenging. The school's lesson observation system is extensive and beneficial, though it has overestimated the proportion of outstanding teaching. The extent to which it fully identifies improvements for individuals is sometimes

incomplete, although the provision of professional development aimed at improving teaching and learning is good. Resources for teaching and learning are good and are used effectively.

Students benefit from the school's excellent partnership working. The school has developed very good links with other schools and further education colleges enabling the development of an outstanding curriculum. The school's science specialism has enabled it to work very effectively with feeder primary schools to raise the profile of science, stimulate interest and improve standards. The school is inclusive and harmonious. Community cohesion is good though a few parents are concerned about communications between school and home.

The governing body fulfil their role as critical friend excellently. They bring a good range of skills and experience to their role. They share the vision for further improvement and are supportive and knowledgeable. They rigorously hold the school to account for its performance, and a high level of challenge is evident.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hadleigh High School, Hadleigh IP7 5HU

Earlier this week I visited your school for two days, accompanied by four other inspectors. We met many of you, sat in on many of your classes, looked at much of your work, and met many of your teachers. You were polite, helpful and well mannered. Thank you.

Your school is a good one and it is improving. You told us many things about your school that you like, and so did your parents. You said that you feel safe and are happy, and that you enjoy your time in school. You have an excellent range of activities which you can join in after school, and many of you do so. You told us that the amount of bullying was very low, and that you knew who to go to for help and guidance if it happens to you. However, we also saw, just occasionally, that the behaviour of a few students, mainly boys, was disruptive in class so that the learning of everybody was affected. Your school cares for you very well, and the range of subjects and courses offered means that all of you can succeed.

We also found out some things that we have asked the school to work on to improve. A number of you, and some parents, told us that marking and homework are different between some subjects. The school will be working on this but they will need you to help to bring about the changes necessary by letting your teachers know if their comments do not tell you how to improve your work, or if you find the homework too easy.

We have also asked the school to look at ways to make sure that aspects of literacy and numeracy are spread throughout the school in all lessons, not just English and mathematics. This will help you to further develop skills of reading, writing, spelling as well as using numbers - all of which are vital skills for life.

Your school has many strengths, and one of them is you. The chances are that you will leave Hadleigh with very good GCSEs or other valuable qualifications which will enable you to succeed in the next phase of education or employment.

Again, thank you, and I wish you all well.

Yours sincerely

Ian Seath

Her Majesty's Inspector