

Hanson School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107440
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	309400
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Lowery

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	1,835
School	1,515
6th form	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Susan Williamson
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Horsley
Date of previous school inspection	October 2003
School address	Sutton Avenue Swain House Road Bradford West Yorkshire BD2 1JP
Telephone number	01274 776200
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector seconded to Ofsted and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Hanson School is an 11 to 18 specialist technology college situated in the north of Bradford. The majority of its students have a White British heritage, with around a quarter from different ethnic minority groups. The school is no more or less advantaged than the average, with the number of students entitled to a free school meal in line with national averages. The school has a broadly average number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although these numbers are steadily increasing. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is high. The school makes provision for students on the autistic spectrum; is a hub school for extended schools and the schools sports partnership; it has an Artsmark, Sportsmark, Investors in People and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides its students with a satisfactory education with some good features. The leadership team has been effective in establishing a positive school ethos where students feel safe. Over the last two years the school has carefully put in place a number of changes in order to raise standards. Whilst these are beginning to have a positive impact, they have not as yet significantly raised standards, in particular in mathematics and across Key Stage 3. During the first five years at the school students overall make satisfactory progress; however standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 4 and 5. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and good provision is made for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and as a result, those who receive additional specialist support make good progress.

The school is popular with parents and students enjoy coming to school. There are good relationships between students from different groups and generally between students and staff. Older students are particularly proud of their school and appreciate the support and extra-curricular opportunities provided. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour around the site is generally calm; however, learning in a minority of lessons at Key Stage 3 is affected by low level disruption, which has a negative impact on the progress of some students in their studies. Attendance levels have improved, but remain below average. The number of exclusions is high. Whilst teaching and learning is judged as satisfactory for some classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 teaching is not tailored to the needs of individual students. The school recognises that it needs to continue to focus on improving teaching and learning and behaviour management.

The school has placed considerable emphasis on successfully developing its Key Stage 4 curriculum, supported by strong partnerships with local schools and businesses. As a result, older students appreciate the choice of subjects and are engaged with their learning. Correspondingly there has been a steady improvement in standards at aged 16. The school recognises it needs to make similar significant reforms to its Key Stage 3 curriculum in order to address the trend of decline in standards for those aged 11 to 14.

The leadership has identified the school's strength and weaknesses; self evaluation is honest and correctly identifies the key priorities for improvement. Development plans are in place but are not used rigorously or consistently enough to monitor new initiatives. However, the school is determined to continue to address its weaknesses and build on its strengths; its capacity for further development is satisfactory. School leaders have been particularly effective in developing its extended schools provision. As a result significant additional resources have been brought into the school for improved facilities, especially sporting accommodation, available to students and the local community.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Overall the sixth form is satisfactory with some good features. Students' progress is closely monitored and where students are not meeting their targets they are mentored or a support programme implemented. As a result many students now

make satisfactory progress with their studies and more of the most able are achieving higher level grades at GCE A level. Most students on the BTEC science course achieve a pass grade, but few gain a merit or better. Standards in advanced level GCE examinations are below average. The school has identified the need to provide more effective guidance and has introduced a wider range of vocational options thus ensuring that students undertake courses that better meet their needs. There are many opportunities in the extended curriculum, including volunteering and work experience, for students to develop skills that will fit them for future study or employment. Students show a mature attitude towards their learning and are personally confident. They say they are well supported and cared for, with staff taking time to assist and resolve problems when they arise. One student said, 'I will miss the availability and help of teachers when I get to university'. The sixth form team has been strengthened by new appointments. These senior leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in provision and have a clear vision for the future. As a result they have instigated appropriate improvement plans, but in many areas it is too early to see the impact of these changes on standards achieved.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards, in particular at Key Stage 3.
- Ensure that teaching and learning are good across the whole school.
- Improve monitoring systems to ensure greater consistency and effectiveness across the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 3

Students start in Year 7 with standards in English, mathematics and science that vary from below to broadly average; many have low literacy levels in particular in reading. Students make satisfactory progress and attain below average standards at the end of Key Stage 3, with boys generally making stronger progress than girls. By the end of Key Stage 4 the progress made is broadly average and this has steadily improved over the last three years. The numbers gaining five or more higher level GCSE passes, including English and mathematics at 16 although steadily improving, remains below average. The school ensures students gain basic skills certification in literacy and numeracy; no student leaves the school without any GCSE or equivalent qualification. This has a positive impact on their future economic well-being. Progress in mathematics is significantly below average and is an issue the school is aware it needs to address. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who receive specialist additional support, including those in the student development centre, are making better progress than many of their peers. Progress is slower for those students with additional needs who are taught exclusively within mainstream classes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being is satisfactory. Students say they feel safe in school but are concerned about the behaviour of a minority of students in some lessons which interrupts their learning. Students respond well to the stimulating material on corridor walls which encourages achievement. Bullying and racist incidents are rare and dealt with quickly and effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory. Students enjoy school, in particular where teaching is tailored to their needs.

Students feel they are encouraged to be healthy by taking part in sporting activities; an increasing number are choosing healthy food options. The school has recently been awarded healthy schools status. Attendance, whilst improving, remains below average. Systems to monitor attendance in the main school are robust, although they are weak in the sixth form. Many students enjoy taking on responsibility and see the school council making a positive contribution to the life of the school. The school offers a good range of extra curricular activities; students are involved in fund raising and are actively encouraged to make a positive contribution to the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Senior and middle managers are well aware of where teaching and learning are most effective, and where improvement is required.

In the most effective lessons teachers have good subject knowledge and are aware of the different ways their students learn. These teachers relate positively to their classes, managing them firmly and with good humour. In such lessons progress is at least satisfactory, often good. Where learning is predominantly teacher led, or where the tasks are dull and the range of questioning limited, students have insufficient opportunity to learn, so some lose interest and misbehave. The most successful teaching is at Key Stage 4, where the wide variety and particular interest of courses engages students' enthusiasm. At Key Stage 3, however, too many lessons are characterised by low-level disruption, often due to lack of appeal in the content or the style of teaching and learning.

Assessment of students' work is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent across subject areas. The English department is particularly effective in tracking students' progress. Marking is variable. In some subjects students receive thoughtful comments on how to improve their work although this is not consistent in all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with some good features. The increased range of courses at Key Stage 4 is improving student motivation. The school recognises however the need to continue to expand its work based courses, in particular for girls, in order to meet the needs of all learners. Strong links with local schools, colleges and employers means the school is now well placed to develop this. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has recently been revised to offer greater opportunities in information technology, physical education and social sciences. However, the impact of these changes on improving learning has still to be evaluated. The school recognises the need for further widespread change at Key Stage 3 in order to ensure the curriculum motivates young people, improves basic skills and meets the needs of all learners.

The curriculum is enriched by a range of extra-curricular activities including sports and drama which are popular and well attended. The student development centre provides good specialist support for vulnerable students, helping them to stay engaged with their learning and make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 2

Students are well supported and cared for during their time at the school. Arrangements to support students joining the school are good and tutors provide effective one to one mentoring. Students receive good guidance in selecting courses at aged 14 and the school is tightening procedures to ensure appropriate entry to relevant sixth form courses. Support for students with particular individual needs is enhanced through good links with outside agencies, in particular looked after children receive good care at the school. Staff identify and then work hard with students who are at risk of disaffection. However, a significant number of students have complex needs and their behaviour frequently presents a challenge to teachers and support staff. Consequently the number of fixed term exclusions is high. Whilst in-house alternatives have recently been developed; these have not yet significantly reduced exclusions and the negative impact on student learning.

The tracking of student progress and target setting is improving and most Key Stage 4 and post 16 students know their targets. However this is not always the case at Key Stage 3. The advice students receive through marking is variable and as a result many students do not know what they have to do to improve. Inconsistent use is made of tutor time to support and prepare students for effective learning. However in the sixth form the time is used more constructively; students were seen delivering presentations and leading discussion on relevant social issues.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3
Sixth form grade: 3

Leadership and management have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the improvements that are required in achievement and standards. The senior leadership team now has key staff in place to lead the work on improving teaching and learning, monitoring and behaviour management. There is a strong approach to inclusion; additional specialist support is effectively deployed to assist students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Senior staff work closely with middle leaders in order to address school priorities. While planning is thorough, monitoring is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that developments are sufficiently embedded in subjects and consistently applied. Self-evaluation is carried out by all departments but it is not yet used consistently in order to secure improvements in teaching and learning in all areas.

Financial planning is secure, allowing the school to focus resources on key developments including the impending school building programme. Value for money is satisfactory. Governance overall is satisfactory. The governing body is aware of the schools strengths and weaknesses. However there is scope for the governing body to strengthen its role in the strategic planning of the school. Governors and senior staff have actively pursued external support in order to tackle the school's poor accommodation. Local commercial partnerships have been developed to good effect and resulted in significant investments into new shared community facilities, including the Goals Centre. Partnership work is strength of the school and used to enhance sixth form provision and increasingly to personalise the Key Stage 4 curriculum in order to better meet the needs of individual students. The schools capacity to make further improvements is satisfactory. Senior staff have clear plans for further improvement; there is some evidence this is having impact, raising performance in English and providing students with increasingly challenging targets.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness of boarding provision	NA	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
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 learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

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.

The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
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 are deployed, including the adequacy of staff, 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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	



12 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Hanson School, Bradford, BD2 1JP

I am writing to let you know the judgements we have made following our visit to your school. Thank you for your help and taking the time to talk to us during the inspection. Your comments were important in enabling us to come to our conclusions. Hanson School provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Your headteacher and staff have worked hard to make improvements to your school. They have improved some of the accommodation, especially the sports facilities, and increased the range of courses available at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Many students reported to inspectors that they enjoy school and welcome the range of extra after school clubs, trip and activities that are on offer. Sixth formers in particular welcome the guidance and support received from teachers and tutors. We were pleased that so many of you were proud of your school and the way students and staff get on well with each other.

During our visit we noted that some students were not making as much progress as they could in Years 7, 8 and 9. We saw that when lessons were not carefully planned, some of you lost interest and your behaviour disrupted the learning of the rest of the class. We found that unless marking is detailed you were not clear how to improve your work. Post 16 students make satisfactory progress, but the standards reached, in particular at the higher levels, are below average.

We have asked the staff and governors to concentrate on:

- improving the progress you make in lessons and the standards you reach, especially in the first three years at the school
- making sure all lessons are taught well and matched to your needs
- checking that all new initiatives are carefully monitored and really make a difference in improving your education.

You need to play your part in making it even better. This includes coming to school regularly, working hard in all lessons and avoiding disrupting others in class. This will make a real difference to your success in your studies.

Good luck in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Lowery'.

Paul Lowery
Lead inspector