

Huntington School

Huntington Road, Huntington, York, North Yorkshire, YO32 9WT

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress in a wide range of subjects and achieve well.
- There is a good atmosphere for learning throughout the school.
- Above average GCSE results reflect the good progress that students make in Years 10 and 11.
- The sixth form is good and A-level results compare very favourably with national averages.
- When younger students have not made expected progress in reading the school provides very effective teaching to enable them to catch up.
- Teaching is either good or outstanding in many lessons.
- Good teaching is lifting attainment in Years 10 and 11 to well above average levels.
- Students enjoy school, behave well and display good attitudes to learning. They say that there is very little bullying and that if it does occur members of staff deal with it effectively.
- Students' attendance is above average and persistent absence below average.
- The school provides a very safe setting for students' education.
- Good leadership and management at all levels, including the governing body, are effective in ensuring that in this improving school the quality of teaching and students' achievement are constantly rising.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, there is insufficient outstanding classroom practice to lift students' progress to the highest levels.
- In the few lessons where teaching requires improvement the pace of learning is too slow.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 lessons, including four joint observations with the headteacher and his senior team.
- They looked carefully at a wide range of students' written work, especially in Years 9 and 11.
- They held meetings with the headteacher, representatives of the governing body, members of staff, groups of students and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at many documents including governing body minutes, school evaluation, development planning, records of students' attainment and progress, a local authority monitoring report and safeguarding procedures.
- They took account of 98 responses to the staff questionnaire and 175 responses to the on-line (Parent View) questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Paddick, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Linda Magrath	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
David Thompson	Additional Inspector
Peter William Harrison	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Huntington School is a larger than average size secondary school and has a large sixth form.
- Almost all students are White British.
- Proportions of students supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those looked after by the local authority.)
- The school does not enter students for GCSE before Year 11.
- A very small number of sixth-form students attend courses at Joseph Rowntree School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - substantially increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching and reducing to zero that which requires improvement
 - using the current outstanding practice as a model for staff to follow
 - increasing pace, challenge and student engagement in a minority of lessons
 - ensuring that teaching fully caters for students of all abilities
 - using some of the teaching assistants more effectively in lessons
 - ensuring that all written work is marked well and that advice given is followed up.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students make good progress and achieve well in a wide range of GCSE, AS and A-level courses. They join Year 7 with above average attainment in English and mathematics and proceed to gain GCSE results that are in many respects consistently above the national average. Most students embarking upon AS and A-level courses in the sixth form complete them and gain qualifications that reflect the good progress they have made.
- GCSE results in 2013 rose substantially compared with 2012. Three quarters of students gained five results in the range A*-C including English and mathematics. This was largely because results in mathematics improved substantially in response to effective intervention work by managers at all levels. Achievement in English and mathematics was good.
- In 2012, some students who joined the school in Year 7 with average and below average attainment in mathematics had underachieved at GCSE in this key subject. The school took effective action in the following twelve months and ensured that in 2013, all students, whatever their level of ability, achieved at least in line with expectations in mathematics and many did better than that.
- The overall good GCSE results of 2012 revealed that the group of students known to be eligible for free school meals did not do as well as other students. 2013 saw the gap closing rapidly in response to the extra support that the school provided.
- At AS and A-level in 2013, proportions of students completing their courses were above average and results in the ranges A* to B and A* to E compared very favourably with national averages. The school's A-level results show a consistent picture over several years and represent good achievement.
- The school's excellent tracking system shows that students of all abilities are currently making at least good progress and many are doing better than that. This includes more-able students, disabled students and those with special educational needs and the very small number of sixth-form students who attend Joseph Rowntree School to study A-level further mathematics and photography. This good progress is confirmed by inspectors' scrutiny of students' work, interviews with them and visits to lessons. The school sets challenging targets for its students and monitors their progress in a robust and effective manner. Good promotion of equal opportunity is reflected in the way that slippage by any individual student or groups triggers effective interventions to enable them to overcome barriers to progress and catch up.
- The school uses its pupil premium funding well in ensuring that gaps between the performance of students known to be eligible for free school meals and other students are closing quickly. For example, the gap at GCSE has reduced substantially between 2012 and 2013 and is predicted by the accurate tracking system to fall further. For example, in 2012 the average GCSE grade for all students was B but for students known to be eligible for pupil premium it was D. The 2013 results showed that the school had successfully reduced the difference to around half a grade. Younger students qualifying for extra support through catch-up funding receive very effective extra help with reading and make very good progress.
- In the large majority of lessons observed by inspectors, students of all abilities were found to be making at least good progress in a very wide range of subjects. Where teaching was outstanding, progress for all students was very rapid. Students generally take a pride in their work and present it well. They express themselves well both orally and in writing. Now that standards in mathematics have risen substantially, students can use numerical and algebraic skills confidently in a range of contexts, particularly in calculations and equations relating to science.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is improving substantially and rapidly in response to effective management initiatives and staff training. It is good in all year groups including the sixth form. The effect of this good and improving teaching is evident in the rising academic standards, especially in Years 10 and 11, the good quality of students' written work that inspectors scrutinised during the inspection and the good quality learning that they observed in the majority of lessons.
- Teachers demonstrate fully the qualities outlined in the National Teaching Standards.
- Good class management and good relationships with students are features which characterise teaching throughout the school. Relationships between teachers and students are universally good.
- Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan their lessons well, maintain a good pace and really interest and inspire their students. Good questioning challenges students and frequently enables them to think out answers for themselves and take some responsibility for their own learning. The activities that teachers plan in these lessons enable students to maximise the time available in gaining new knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers generate a superb atmosphere for learning so students demonstrate a thirst for knowledge and improvement and make rapid progress. Examples of this high quality teaching were observed during the inspection in lessons in English in Years 8 and 10, French in Year 13, geography in Year 8, food technology in Year 11 and resistant materials in Year 7.
- In the few lessons where teaching requires improvement, the pace of learning is much slower than in the majority of lessons. These lessons lack the drive, challenge, excitement and compelling explanations and activities that are evident in the better lessons. This is sometimes because teachers spend too long with explanations and do not fully engage the interest of all their students. Sometimes they do not cater fully for students of all abilities so for some, progress is relatively slow.
- There is variability in the quality of deployment of teaching assistants in lessons. Frequently they are well-informed and target their help effectively but there are instances of their roles and targets not being effectively incorporated into the planning and teaching of lessons.
- The marking of students' work is generally good. There are many examples of outstanding practice where teachers really make every effort to ensure that students learn from their mistakes. Marking usually identifies ways in which students can improve their work but teachers do not always ensure that their advice and instructions have been followed. For example, unfinished or incomplete work is frequently identified through marking but not followed up later.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students in all year groups display positive attitudes to learning. They are generally keen to learn and co-operate well with their teachers and classroom assistants. Students' behaviour at breaks, lunchtimes and when moving between classrooms is mature and sensible. Evidence strongly suggests that the good behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of the day-to-day operation of the school.
- Student perceptions gained through interviews with inspectors, the on-line parental survey and the staff questionnaire all confirm that all stakeholders are confident that behaviour in the school is good.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence below average because the school has robust systems to ensure that students attend regularly.
- Excellent care, guidance and support for students of all ages ensure that they are all treated as individuals and their needs met. This is especially true for younger students who need extra help with their reading and writing and for disabled students and those with special educational needs. The effectiveness of the support programme is reflected in some really moving examples

of students who start from a very low attainment base in Year 7 and proceed to gain excellent GCSE results. Parents speak highly of the levels of care, guidance and support that are available for their children, for example on transfer from primary school.

- Students say that they feel perfectly safe in school and recognise the lengths that teachers and their assistants will go to in order to overcome periods of unhappiness or barriers to progress. They fully understand how to keep safe and confirm that they have learnt about a wide range of potential risks to their safety and welfare, for example, different types of bullying, smoking and alcohol. Students confirm that racist incidents and bullying are rare and that when they do occur they have every confidence that members of staff would deal with them effectively. The school's detailed records of these incidents confirm that they are indeed relatively rare and that effective action is taken as and when it is necessary
- There is a small minority of students who sometimes find it difficult to conduct themselves consistently in line with the school's high expectations. On the occasions that they need to be removed from class to ensure that other pupils can learn effectively, they are transferred to a base where they can work under very close supervision. This system is very effective.

The leadership and management are good

- Huntington School is successful and effective because the headteacher and his senior team lead and manage it very well. Middle and junior managers support them effectively to ensure that intended changes and improvements materialise quickly. The whole team of managers has a relentless and effective focus on the quality of teaching and good student achievement. It is obvious that the whole team works very well together because teaching and attainment are improving quickly. The staff questionnaire shows that morale is good and that members of staff support the constant push for further improvement.
- The school has very effective methods for checking on how well it is doing, so managers know where there are strong features and areas which still need to be improved. There is no room for complacency here. When improvements are deemed necessary, high profile action-plans chart the actions to be taken, success criteria, timescales and methods of monitoring and evaluation. Currently, the main focus is on the quality of teaching in order to move the standard of education that the school provides from good to outstanding.
- Management of teaching is effective in improving classroom practice. Senior managers monitor teaching accurately and provide teachers with appropriate areas for improvement. Performance management arrangements are robust and effective, and the proportion of teaching requiring improvement is reducing quickly. However, there is still scope to make greater use of the school's outstanding classroom practice as a model for teachers to follow.
- Leaders have designed a very good curriculum which enables students to choose from a wide range of GCSE and AS and A-level courses, while there are many extra-curricular activities designed to widen their horizons and increase confidence. Equal opportunity has a high profile which ensures that the needs of all students are met. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted strongly. Careers education and good quality information about courses available within school and with other providers ensure that students can make the right choices about next stages in their education or the world of work.
- Safeguarding meets all requirements. Arrangements for checking on the identities of all adults who have access to students are exemplary.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a very clear understanding about the school's strong features and are well-informed about what still needs to be improved. They ensure that managers are challenged in a professional manner and ensure that performance management arrangements are effective.
 - They have a clear understanding of how well students of all ages and abilities are doing in relation to national expectations and averages.
 - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and ensure that salary progressions are carefully monitored.

- They know how the school uses its pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up funding, and understand the impact it has had in closing performance gaps and raising attainment.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	121673
Local authority	York
Inspection number	429579

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1462
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	309
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	May Kaye
Headteacher	John Tomsett
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2009
Telephone number	01904 752100
Fax number	01904 752101
Email address	j.tomsett@huntington-ed.org.uk

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