

Henry Cort Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116466
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	357976
Inspection dates	15–16 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Russell 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 of pupils on the school roll	876
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Robinson
Principal	Mr P Munday
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 October 2007
School address	Hillson Drive Fareham Hampshire PO15 6PH
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty eight lessons were observed, taught by 37 teachers; there were also a number of briefer visits to lessons. Meetings were held with students, staff and representatives of the governing body, and telephone discussions were held with the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation as well as 122 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How consistently good teaching is now and whether the relative weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been corrected.
- How closely the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of students.
- The effectiveness of the school's systems for monitoring, quality assurance and the development of teaching, and the role that middle leaders play in these processes.

Information about the school

Henry Cort is slightly smaller than the average sized secondary school. The school is a specialist sports college. It holds a number of awards, including enhanced Healthy Schools Status. Most students live in the south west of Fareham. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most students are from White British backgrounds.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Henry Cort is a good school. Although it was also judged to be good when it was inspected in 2007, it has continued to improve and a number of aspects of the school's work are now outstanding. The school's particular strengths are the way in which staff care for and support students, and the way in which they are able to shape the curriculum to meet the particular needs of individual students. They achieve this, in part, by working closely with a range of partners.

The impact of these strengths can be seen, for example, in students' excellent awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. It can also be seen in improvements in behaviour and in attendance, which is now above average. Students also achieve well, and the proportion gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics, has risen significantly in recent years. The quality of teaching is good, although some variability remains.

These improvements are a result of good leadership. The principal provides clear and effective leadership and has successfully developed and strengthened the roles of other senior and middle leaders. Leaders across the school have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that they still need to work on; the school is well placed to continue its improvement. In many respects, leaders make good use of data about students' achievement in their work. However, they do not make full use of this data to measure and evaluate the impact of changes and new developments. The sports specialism is a strength of the school's work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that in all lessons teachers:
 - take account of the need to challenge students of different abilities, particularly those of higher ability, when they plan their lessons
 - provide students with more frequent opportunities to work and learn more independently.
- Refine the way in which leaders use data about students' achievement and other outcomes to measure the impact of the changes that they make to the school's provision.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good: students make good progress from their slightly below average starting points in Year 7 to reach average levels by the end of Year 11. Examination results have improved in the last few years. The average total examination point score achieved by students is above average. Attainment in mathematics has been slightly below average in recent years, although it is improving.

Patterns of achievement across different groups are generally consistent, although more-able students sometimes make less progress than others. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of particular students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and these students generally make good progress. A small group of these students did not make such good progress last year, but this group is on track to make better progress this year. Achievement in the specialist subject of physical education is strong and almost all students achieve a qualification in this subject. Almost everyone also gains qualifications in languages and information and communication technology (ICT).

The vast majority of students enjoy school and respond very well in lessons. Behaviour has improved in recent years. Students behave very well around the site and are polite, pleasant and positive. The numbers of exclusions has fallen dramatically. While there is occasionally some misbehaviour in lessons, this is rare. Opportunities for students to contribute to the school and wider community are good. Sports college status plays a useful role here, enabling many students to work as sports leaders in local schools.

Attendance has improved: it was below average four years ago, but is now slightly above average, and the proportion of students who are persistently absent has fallen. Where they are given the opportunity, students work well independently and in groups. However, such opportunities are not frequent enough. Intensive support for individual students has resulted in a reduction in the number of students who leave without going into education, employment or training.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is typically good, and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are characterised by very positive relationships between students and teachers. In most cases, lesson plans take account of the need to challenge students of different abilities and teachers provide students with extensive opportunities to work independently and actively in the lesson. Although the overall quality of teaching is good, teaching is no better than satisfactory in a small minority of lessons. In less effective lessons, teachers often do not take full account of the need to plan in a way that challenges students of different abilities; this particularly affects more-able students. The teacher also often over-dominates these lessons, with too few opportunities for students to work on their own, with other students, or on more extended activities.

Leaders have worked to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of students very closely. It is very flexible and closely shaped to the needs of different students. Students have access to a wide range of academic and vocational courses; many follow some of their courses at other schools and colleges. A number of Key Stage 4 students benefit from a distinctive curriculum that includes a strong focus on core subjects, work experience, outdoor education and basic skills. Unusually, almost all students study a modern foreign language to age 16; provision in this area is strong. Enrichment is also very strong: students benefit from a wide range of very interesting opportunities and activities, many provided through the fortnightly, flexibly timetabled 'day 10' curriculum.

Students are very well cared for. The school's education inclusion department helps to provide a highly supportive environment. Excellent links with a range of agencies help to sustain the learning, development and wellbeing of students in challenging circumstances. The impact of this work can be seen, for example, in a reduction in absence and in fewer students leaving without entering education, employment or training. Tutor groups now consist of a mixture of students in Years 7 to 11. This has been a very successful development and has helped to create an environment where younger students can be supported and guided by older ones.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal and his senior colleagues provide the school with clear and effective leadership. Much has been done to extend this high quality leadership across the school and build up the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders. Leaders’ evaluation of the school’s effectiveness is very realistic and accurate. Teaching is monitored carefully and much useful work is done to help teachers to develop their practice. The work of curriculum areas is monitored regularly and thoroughly. The governing body helps to provide useful support and challenge, although its members recognise that there is scope to sharpen the way in which they challenge leaders about student achievement.

There are many very good aspects to the way in which leaders use data about students’ targets and achievement in their work. The progress of Year 11 students in particular is tracked very closely and a range of support is provided to those who may not meet their targets. However, tracking of achievement is less extensive in other year groups. Leaders also do not make full use of data from their tracking of students’ outcomes to test and evaluate the impact of the work that they are doing and the changes that they are putting in place.

The school’s partnership work is excellent and a range of effective provision is in place to promote community cohesion. The school works very closely with a number of other schools in the local area and a range of agencies and community partners. Leaders do much to form close links with parent and carers, for example through the work of specific home-school workers. The school also has a number of strong international links, for example with South Africa. National links, which could do much to extend students’ understanding of more diverse part of Britain, are less well developed.

Effective systems are in place to safeguard students; provision in this area meets government requirements well. Leaders also have good regard to the need to promote equality and are committed to meeting the needs of all students. Any patterns of different achievement between groups are recognised and acted upon.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents’ and carers’ responses to the inspection questionnaire were generally very positive. In particular, a large proportion of respondents feel that their children are happy and safe in school. There was no particular pattern to the small number of concerns raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Henry Cort Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 876 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	31	74	61	7	6	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	44	36	76	62	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	45	37	72	59	3	2	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	37	70	57	3	2	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	34	28	81	66	6	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	32	26	82	67	6	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	25	73	60	11	9	2	9
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	34	73	60	1	1	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	35	29	79	65	6	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	23	68	56	20	16	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	17	76	62	16	13	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	34	28	72	59	9	7	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	49	40	62	51	8	7	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 June 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Henry Cort Community College, Fareham PO15 6PH

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

Henry Cort is a good school. It has improved well in the past few years, and a number of aspects of the school's work are now outstanding. In particular, staff care for and support you very well, helping you to feel very safe and happy in school. The curriculum – the mixture of subjects that you study – is also carefully adapted to your needs and interests. These things are helped by the very strong partnerships that have been built up with people outside the school.

Examination results have improved and your attendance is now above average. You also behave well. Teaching is good overall, although some lessons are not as good as the best. The most important thing for the school now is to ensure that all lessons are at least good.

The school is well led by the principal and the other leaders in the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and know what to do next to continue its improvement. The way in which they use information about your achievement is very good in many ways, although we have suggested that they could make more use of it to check the impact of the changes that they make in school.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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