

Sir Christopher Hatton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122122
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359175
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Joyce HMI

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1198
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tony Francis
Headteacher	Victoria Bishop
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
School address	The Pyghtle Wellingborough NN8 4RP
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 35 lessons taught by different teachers, and visited classrooms to review the work of a further 11 teachers. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, school middle managers, nominated teachers and support staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a fellow governor and with groups of pupils from each year group. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at minutes of meetings, school improvement plans, subject self-evaluations and many other school policies. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 148 parents and carers, 68 school staff and a sample of over 140 pupils.

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

- How is assessment used in marking, feedback and in lessons?
- What has been the impact of the specialist status in raising standards across the school?
- How effective are guidance and support arrangements for different groups of pupils?
- What impact do subject leaders have in improving provision?
- How the provision in the sixth form has been developed to ensure students achieve to their full potential.

Information about the school

Sir Christopher Hatton is a large school that serves a diverse socio-economic catchment area. Approximately two thirds of the schools population are from White British Backgrounds with pupils from Indian Backgrounds being the main minority ethnic group. A higher proportion of pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average although the number with statements of special educational need is above average. The school is a specialist mathematics and computing school and has gained numerous external quality marks including Leading Partnerships with parents, Governor Mark, Healthy Schools status, Inclusion Quality Mark and the Every Child Matters Silver Quality Mark. The school is a Teacher Learning Academy Centre.

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

1

Main findings

This is a good school that is rapidly improving. Excellent leadership and outstanding governance have ensured a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning to raise achievement levels. Significant and sustained improvement since the last inspection has resulted in increased pupil attendance and achievement, more effective teaching and learning and a curriculum that better meets pupils' needs. Care, guidance and support arrangements are now outstanding and contribute significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being. The school provides an extremely safe and very supportive environment that enables all groups to achieve well. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and information is used extremely well by subject leaders across the school to improve provision for which they are responsible. The many improvements since the last inspection show the school's outstanding capacity to improve further.

Outcomes for pupils are now good, with attainment levels above average having improved significantly over the last two years. Pupils make good progress as a result of stronger target setting and monitoring arrangements and much-improved teaching. Most lessons are engaging and interesting, with activities well planned to meet individual needs and ability levels. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in many lessons to enhance pupils' enjoyment and to encourage participation. The frequent use of assessment to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding and to plan further learning is a key strength of the best lessons. In the minority of less-effective lessons, assessment information is not used sufficiently well to plan learning and, consequently, pupils are not adequately challenged to ensure that they make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils achieve particularly well in subjects such as mathematics, German and religious education but not as well in subjects such as history, music or science. Subject leaders are working well to improve achievement levels in lower performing subjects and achievement rates continue to rise.

The good curriculum enables pupils to experience an increasing range of vocational and academic courses and to gain skills and knowledge that prepare them well for later life. The specialist mathematics and computing status is having a beneficial impact on raising standards across the school and pupils develop these skills very effectively throughout the curriculum. A good personal, social and health education programme contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and ensures pupils develop a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. However, the curriculum, along with the many extra-curricular

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activities provided, is not monitored or evaluated in sufficient detail to ensure a positive impact on the personal development of all pupils. Survey results and discussions with pupils confirm varying levels of participation, engagement and enjoyment with curriculum activities for different groups of pupils. Behaviour around the school is good, although in a minority of lessons, usually because of less-engaging teaching, low-level disruption sometimes inhibits pupil progress and limits their enjoyment of a lesson.

The sixth form has improved and is now good. Much improved tracking and monitoring of student progress together with better teaching have ensured that attainment levels have risen. The curriculum is improving and good advice and guidance have resulted in increasing numbers joining the sixth form and in more students progressing from the sixth form into higher education institutions. Good leadership and management continue to improve provision and are helping ensure students fulfil their potential.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the schools best practice in teaching, learning and assessment across all departments to ensure the consistency of pupil achievement in all subjects.
- Monitor the participation rates of pupils in extra-curricular activities and the impact that each subject has on pupils' personal development.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils join Year 7 with broadly average levels of attainment. They make good progress throughout the school to achieve above average GCSE results in Year 11. Observations of lessons and pupils' work during the inspection confirm that pupils make good progress and achieve well. In most lessons, pupils settle quickly and are attentive and willing to learn. Pupils enjoy lessons where they are engaged in meaningful and memorable learning activities and where they are able to participate in discussions, debate or in group tasks. Inspection evidence confirms that all groups of pupils achieve well with no significant underperformance for any specific group of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups and for those with English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support that enables them to progress and achieve as well as their peers. The school recognises that the rate of pupil progress and levels of attainment vary between different subjects and through the successful work of subject leaders is successfully narrowing achievement gaps.

Pupils' wider personal development is good. Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that any instances of bullying are effectively dealt with. Attendance rates have improved significantly and are above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school life. The curriculum enables pupils to develop a wide range of skills that contribute well to their future economic well-being. Pupils make a good contribution

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to both the school and wider community through the school and youth councils where their influence is growing.

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	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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?

Typically, teachers use a range of teaching methods to make lessons interesting and enjoyable for pupils. The majority of lessons observed by inspectors were good and a few were outstanding. Most lessons are well planned and teachers make good use of pupil profiles to ensure activities are well matched to ability levels. Many lessons enable the development of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills as well as developing communication and team-working skills. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are frequently checked by good questioning techniques and by the regular marking of work by most teachers. However, in a minority of less-effective lessons, activities are not well matched to pupils' different capabilities, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to participate or low-level disruption slows the rate of pupil progress.

The curriculum has improved and now better meets the individual needs and interests of pupils with a wider range of vocational and applied options introduced alongside National Curriculum subjects. Activities such as visits and guest speakers make the curriculum more enjoyable and three themed focus days during the year provide opportunities for pupils to learn about careers, internationalism or to try something new. The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive although some groups of pupils do not participate and this impacts on their personal development

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

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and enjoyment of the curriculum. Care, guidance and support arrangements are highly effective and are contributing significantly to improving attendance rates, reducing exclusions and raising attainment levels. The revised pastoral system has strengthened the support provided by form tutors and enables well-targeted support to be provided. Pupils are confident with the advice and guidance provided by the school and many commented extremely positively about the friendly and supportive staff. The school works extremely well with external support agencies and has funded a staff member to work with children and families in the community to further support the development and well-being of pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers have successfully created a culture of high expectation that has led to significant improvements in attainment. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by senior managers and staff. The school's use of performance data to inform self-evaluation and to aid improvement is outstanding. Subject leaders are using information to improve provision and to raise achievement levels in their areas of responsibility and are reducing the variations in subject performance. Improvement plans are focused on raising standards with a strong emphasis on further enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. The school's processes for observing the quality of teaching and learning and the use of observation information to inform staff training and development are extremely comprehensive and are improving provision across the school.

The governing body provides outstanding support for the school and uses its members' experience and expertise well to ensure that the school is held to account for its performance. It provides excellent support and challenge to the school in relation to personnel, finance and resource issues, and with regard to inclusion. Equality of opportunity and community cohesion are well promoted within the school. Pupils form positive relationships with each other and show respect for one another; they gain a good appreciation of different cultures and backgrounds and are all treated fairly. The school's safeguarding arrangements are exemplary especially as regards access to school buildings but also with the extremely detailed policies and procedures that are in place to ensure pupils' safety and well-being. The school has excellent quality assurance and risk assessment procedures that are comprehensively understood by governors and staff. Pupils are well-informed and extremely aware of how to keep themselves safe.

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The schools work to engage with parents and carers has been recently strengthened and is now good. Surveys are used particularly well to establish the views of parents and carers and as a result communication channels have improved and the school has funded a member of staff to work more closely with children and families in the community. Wider partnership working is good and the school has beneficial links with external partners that promote learning and pupil well-being. The school has good links with local primary schools and with community groups through work in promoting the mathematics and computing specialism.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

This is an improving sixth form where students make good progress. Attainment levels are increasing although, as with the main school, there is variation between subjects with pupils achieving well in chemistry and in English but not as well in biology or psychology. Students enjoy the sixth form, have mature attitudes and make a good contribution to school life. Attendance levels are high and students are punctual to lessons. Teaching is typically well planned with ICT being used increasingly to make lessons more interactive and enjoyable. The best lessons are outstanding and ensure all students are sufficiently challenged and supported to fulfil their potential. In the minority of less-effective lessons, although satisfactory overall, students are not sufficiently engaged or challenged as activities are too teacher led.

Good leadership continues to improve provision and levels of attainment. Clear and consistent systems to monitor progress have been introduced and students are clear about their targets and what they need to do to improve. Guidance and support arrangements have been strengthened and are good. Students appreciate the

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support given by year group tutors and subject teachers, and working relationships are strong. The school has good links with local universities and provides good support for the increasing number of students that make higher education applications. The curriculum at A level is broad and enables students to study a wide range of subjects including an increasing range of vocational and applied courses.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who returned questionnaires were generally very supportive of the school and the quality of education it provides. Many made additional comments about the improvements made to the school. Several comments were received about the excellent security arrangements and the effectiveness of the care, guidance and support provided. The view expressed by one parent who stated, 'My child is happy and progresses well,' reflected most of the positive comments received. A minority of parents and carers expressed concern about the consistency with which the school deals with disruptive or poor behaviour and with the variable quality of teaching and access to some resources. These concerns were investigated by the inspection team and, where appropriate, recommendations to further improve the school have been made in this report. A relatively high number of negative responses were received relating to the way in which the school helps pupils to lead healthy lifestyles and the way the school helps parents and carers support their child. Both these areas are being addressed by the school and as reflected by the recent achievement of external quality awards, good progress is being made in addressing these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir Christopher Hatton School 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 148 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,198 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	38	80	54	11	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	47	74	50	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	38	88	60	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	52	35	85	58	8	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	35	24	99	67	8	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	20	86	59	25	17	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	12	99	67	28	19	2	1
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)	34	23	93	63	9	6	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	26	98	67	7	5	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	23	87	59	16	11	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	16	90	61	19	13	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	30	20	102	69	6	4	5	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	33	89	61	4	3	2	1

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	59	36	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 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 2009/10 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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sir Christopher Hatton School, Wellingborough, NN8 4RP

Thank you for making such a positive contribution to our recent inspection. We appreciated you sharing your views about the school with us. We enjoyed visiting the school and your views, alongside the questionnaire responses from your parents and carers, were very helpful in informing the judgements we have made.

We judged the school and the sixth form to be good and improving and were particularly impressed by:

- the good progress you are now making because of good teaching in many lessons
- the standards that you achieve, which are above national averages
- the outstanding care, guidance and support that the school provides
- the improved curriculum that prepares you well for later life
- the effectiveness of leaders, managers and the governing body in making improvements.

It was clear to us that the school provides a very safe and supportive environment for you and we were pleased to hear that the majority of you said you enjoy school life. You will be pleased to hear that we are confident that school leaders are well aware of what they need to do to improve the school further and to assist them we have asked the headteacher to:

- share best practice in teaching, learning and assessment so that you make good progress and achieve consistently well in all subjects
- monitor and evaluate the curriculum to ensure activities are even more meaningful, memorable and enjoyable for all of you.

You can help the school and your teachers by continuing to work hard in all of your lessons. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Joyce
Her Majesty's Inspector

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