

Nidderdale High School and Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121700
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	359071
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Maddison HMI

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	422
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss S Reid
Headteacher	Mr Graham Broadbent
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 25 lessons and 24 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, senior staff, middle leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, data analyses, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of the governing body meetings, students' books, and 231 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also looked at questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- The achievement of all groups of students, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Whether the quality of teaching is good enough, the use of assessment effective enough, the curriculum appropriate enough, and care, guidance and support strong enough to raise achievement and promote high outcomes for all students.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and driving forward strategies to raise attainment and achievement throughout the school.

Information about the school

Nidderdale High School and Community College is smaller than the average secondary school. It serves the town of Pateley Bridge and a large rural catchment area. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also well below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs are both average. The school has had specialist status in science and the visual arts since 2004. A new headteacher joined the school in September 2010.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Nidderdale High School and Community College is a satisfactory school. It has some good features. Pastoral care is a strength and the school provides students with a safe and caring environment which promotes their personal development well.

Achievement is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average. However, some students are not making sufficient progress and more students could attain higher standards. In 2010, the school secured its best ever examination results. Sixty-two per cent of students achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics and 74% of students achieved five or more passes at grades A* to C overall. However, the proportions of students who achieved these two key performance measures were below the school's targets. Furthermore, analysis of attainment information across the wider curriculum reveals some inconsistency of performance across subjects. Evidence from students' books and lessons, as well as from the latest assessments of students' performance, confirms this picture of variation in standards between subjects. The school is aware of these inconsistencies and new systems for monitoring students' progress and attainment are in place. They indicate that more students are on track to achieve their targets this summer. However, these systems and procedures are not yet embedded enough to impact significantly on students' performance.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but it is not consistently good enough to ensure that students make sufficient progress in their learning. Inspectors observed examples of good and outstanding teaching and this provides a basis for the school to move forward. However, students are not given sufficient opportunities to reflect upon what they are learning and to work independently. Marking is not of a consistently high quality and does not clearly outline the steps students need to take to improve their work. Assessment information is not used effectively to plan work which meets the learning needs of all students. Furthermore, expectations of what students can do and achieve are not high enough and in too many lessons the level of challenge was only satisfactory.

Behaviour is good in and around the school. Some poor behaviour was observed in lessons but in all cases it was directly linked with teaching and learning which was undemanding and which failed to engage the students. Students are respectful, polite and courteous to each other and to staff, and say that they enjoy coming to school. This is demonstrated by the improvement in attendance which is now average and rising. The school provides good support to students who are potentially vulnerable. Good care, guidance and support and effective safeguarding procedures help to ensure that students are safe and well looked after. The school's specialist status, especially the work in the visual arts, makes a significant contribution to students' enjoyment, their wider curriculum experiences and their well-being. The school works well with a range of partners to

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improve outcomes for all students. As a result, students make a good contribution to the school and wider community.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has an accurate understanding of what is required to raise attainment and improve outcomes for students. He has a focused agenda and, with the governing body, is giving clear strategic direction on the school's key priorities. Leadership at all levels is being increasingly challenged and held to account. However, middle leaders' understanding of their role and accountability in improving students' outcomes is yet to be fully developed across all subject areas.

Furthermore, the use of performance data by middle leaders to identify underachievement quickly and respond with swift action to accelerate students' progress is not yet embedded across the school. The increasingly focused work of senior leaders, together with accurate self-evaluation, clear improvement plans, and the satisfactory learning observed by inspectors in classrooms, combine to show that the school has the capacity to improve.

Much is being done to accelerate students' achievement but students are not achieving as well as they could. Parents and carers are supportive of the school. The school recognises, though, the need to engage more systematically with them and to ensure that they have a clearer understanding of how they can support their children's learning.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' achievement through improving the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that there is greater expectation and challenge in all lessons to meet the needs of all learners
 - improving the consistency and quality of marking to that of the best in the school so all students have a clear view of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - creating more opportunities in lessons for students to reflect upon their learning and develop as independent learners
 - using assessment information more precisely to plan learning activities that are more closely aligned to students' individual needs and academic targets.
- Develop the leadership and management skills of all leaders to ensure that middle leaders:
 - use performance data systematically so that underachievement is identified quickly and swift action is taken to accelerate progress
 - are effectively held to account by senior leaders for the performance of students.
- Engage further with parents and carers so that they have a clearer understanding of how to play a greater role in supporting their children's education.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are broadly average and they make satisfactory progress in their learning. Inspectors saw some lessons where good

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progress was made. In these lessons, students were willingly engaged with their learning because they had been motivated and the activities provided offered challenge and interest for every student, regardless of ability. However, in too many lessons progress is not rapid enough. In these weaker lessons teaching does not consider carefully enough the needs of all students. There was also too much 'teacher talk' and insufficient opportunities were provided for students to become independent learners. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other students. Some do well and this is because of the good level of support they receive. However, there is also some underachievement, especially in lessons where there is less effective teaching. The same is true for more-able students, including gifted and talented ones, and they also underachieve in lessons where there is insufficient challenge.

Students feel safe and say that any bullying is effectively and quickly dealt with. Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and the opportunities to be involved in sport both within and beyond the curriculum are much appreciated. Students are keen to take on responsibilities and are proud of their record of fund-raising and their contribution to the local and wider community. They enjoy these activities which develop their self-esteem. They also help them to understand their growing responsibilities as young citizens and prepare them effectively for their future lives beyond the classroom. Students also benefit from sound careers advice, and growing links with employers are developing valuable skills and knowledge which will support their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

The school is rightly proud of the quality of the pastoral care it provides for its students. Staff know the students well. Good arrangements are in place to ease the transition between one phase of education and another. There is good support for students when they arrive in Year 7 and effective advice and guidance on future options when they are preparing to leave after Year 11.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a range of academic and vocational courses at Key Stage 4. The provision is enhanced further through local partnership arrangements, with for example, Askham Bryan College, and through bespoke courses, such as The Nidderdale Academy, which provides a personalised curriculum for a small group of students. Plans are in place to develop the curriculum further at Key Stage 4 so that it meets more directly the needs of all students.

While the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, inspectors observed teaching which ranged from inadequate to good. However, teaching is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that students make consistently good progress. Students generally enjoy their lessons but, because work is not always appropriately matched to their abilities, the progress they make over time is not being maximised. Some particularly effective learning was observed when teachers' expectations were clear and when effective questioning prompted students to think and reflect on what they were learning. When teaching was engaging, students' attitudes were positive and they readily involved themselves in the tasks and activities. However, this is not routine practice. When students were expected to be passive learners and were not given a variety of activities which included sufficient opportunities to work independently, their interest soon waned with a corresponding decline in their behaviour.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. However, although they have assessment information about the specific needs of individual students, this is not being used effectively enough to plan learning, challenge students and improve their achievement. In the better lessons, teachers are lively and enthusiastic; they take account of individual needs, set work which is appropriate for different abilities, maintain a brisk pace and ensure that at key points they check the learning and understanding of all students before they move on. The quality of marking and written feedback is variable. Examples seen in lessons, and in a separate work scrutiny, ranged from books which had work unmarked to those which provided students with clear targeted information on how to improve further. However, too many comments gave generic advice and did not explain clearly enough to students what they had to do to improve.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

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How effective are leadership and management?

In a relatively short space of time the new headteacher has started to strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management across the school. Restructuring senior and middle leadership teams is enabling the school to focus firmly on key priorities, in particular, in relation to raising students' performance. School improvement planning is detailed with measurable success criteria evident. Middle leaders are beginning to be held to account for the performance of their students. However, they are not as effective as they could be because there is too much variety of practice. For example, rigorous systems for target-setting and tracking students' performance have been introduced. While these systems provide a clearer picture of the progress of different groups of students, they are not yet securely embedded across the school. Furthermore, the information generated is not being used effectively by middle leaders to check on students' performance and by teachers to inform planning in all subjects. As a result, despite focused professional development, too much teaching remains satisfactory.

The school sets challenging targets, equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is tackled. However, significant variation exists between subjects. Safeguarding procedures, including child protection arrangements, required staff checks and site safety are good. The school knows its own and the wider community well and it makes a strong contribution to community cohesion. The governing body meets regularly and is very supportive of the school. It has a sound understanding of the issues facing the school and it provides satisfactory challenge to senior leaders.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

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Views of parents and carers

A much higher-than-average percentage of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and the large majority responded positively to most statements. A number of parents and carers who responded added written comments. Most parents report the school keeps their children safe and greatly appreciate the level of pastoral care which is provided. However, some parents who responded raised concerns about unacceptable behaviour and insufficient challenge in lessons. The inspection team investigated these concerns carefully and their judgements are reflected in appropriate sections of this report. Inspectors consider that the school works hard to inform parents and carers about their children's progress. However, the school recognises that it must persist in finding more effective ways of ensuring parents and carers have a clearer understanding of how they can support their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nidderdale High School and 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 231 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 422 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	19	150	65	31	13	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	70	30	154	67	3	1	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	24	151	65	17	7	6	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	19	135	58	40	17	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	33	14	156	68	27	12	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	12	147	64	40	17	9	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	14	165	71	29	13	3	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)	41	18	141	61	13	6	5	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	18	150	65	26	11	7	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	19	128	55	34	15	10	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	15	140	61	30	13	7	3
The school is led and managed effectively	50	22	146	63	12	5	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	26	142	61	19	8	6	3

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	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.



10 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Nidderdale High School and Community College, Harrogate, HG3 5HL

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. We greatly appreciated the time you spent talking to us and we found your comments very helpful. As well as coming into lessons and looking at your work, we read the questionnaires completed by you and your parents or carers.

We came to your school to find out what was going well and what could be improved. Your school is satisfactory with some good features. Staff care for you well and the good care, guidance and support you receive help to support your personal and academic development. You told us that you feel safe, and there is a calm and orderly atmosphere. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is improving. You also said that you enjoy coming to school and the opportunities offered such as the extra-curricular activities.

Although your school is providing you with a satisfactory education, we know it can do much better. As a result, we have asked the headteacher, the governors and your teachers to focus on a number of priorities which include making sure that:

- your teachers use the assessment information they have about each of you to guide them more closely in planning lessons
- you are given work which is challenging and which is matched to your needs
- your teachers regularly check your understanding before they move on to something new in lessons
- you are given more opportunities in your learning to work independently
- your work is closely checked and marking clearly details the steps you need to take to improve.

We have also asked the school to make sure that the performance data it collects on you are used systematically to identify underachievement and ensure that swift action is taken to accelerate your progress. In addition, we want the school to help your parents and carers to have a clearer understanding of how they can play a greater role in supporting your education.

The headteacher and senior leaders are determined to improve your school and the teachers are working hard on your behalf. However, you have your part to play and you can certainly help your teachers with some of these things by coming to school regularly and working to the best of your ability.

We very much enjoyed visiting your school and I would like to thank you once again for being so friendly and polite.

I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison

Her Majesty's Inspector

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