

Cottingham High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118079
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	363882
Inspection dates	8–9 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Gina White 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1534
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mike Williams
Headteacher	Mrs Elizabeth Logan
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2007
School address	Harland Way Cottingham HU16 5PX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 46 lessons, taught by 44 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the arrangements for safeguarding and the school's planning, monitoring records and data. Questionnaires from students, staff and 131 parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- How effectively the drive for improvement is demonstrated at all levels of school leadership.
- The effectiveness of actions to tackle improvement in Key Stage 3 students' attainment and progress.
- How the curriculum supports and impacts on the achievement of specific student groups, and students' enjoyment of school.
- How well teaching challenges all groups of students and the impact this has on their learning and progress in lessons.

Information about the school

Cottingham High School is a much larger-than-average school. It serves a broad community including the town of Cottingham, nearby villages and the suburbs of North Hull. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Almost all students are of White British heritage and small numbers are from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is low. Around 11% of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below the average nationally, and of these, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the average. The school was designated as a specialist school for media arts in 2004 and holds a number of awards including Investors in People and Healthy School status.

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

Cottingham High School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. Staff are caring and the school is a calm, orderly and safe place for students. The new headteacher is providing strong leadership. Initiatives designed to improve achievement, which have been introduced since her appointment in September 2010, are challenging the expectations of staff and students. Although attainment at Key Stage 3 and 4 is in line with the national average overall, since the previous inspection students' attainment across subjects and their progress in different year groups has been uneven. Recent improvements in the school's use of data are enabling leaders and managers to identify earlier those students who are making slower progress. A range of strategies and initiatives have begun to support these students. Systems to monitor and track students' progress are effective. Data collected by the school, along with inspection evidence, show that the large majority of students, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress. About a third of students are making more rapid progress.

The quality of teaching varies widely and is satisfactory overall. Inspectors observed a core of good and occasionally outstanding teaching in which lessons were well structured in line with students' abilities, promoted active learning and challenged students to think and produce work of a very high standard. Where teaching and learning are weaker, there is insufficient planning and tailoring of lessons to challenge all students and this slows their learning and progress. Behaviour is good. The vast majority of students behave well in lessons and they treat each other and staff with respect. Students listen attentively. They engage readily in activities and cooperate well with each other when they have opportunities to work with a partner or in small groups. However, low-level disruption was noted in a very small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons by a few students. School leaders have been proactive in tackling poor behaviour, which has interfered with learning and enjoyment for some students in the past few years. They have met with much success and the need to resort to exclusion has reduced significantly.

The curriculum, which was good at the previous inspection, has greater breadth with new courses and qualifications tailored to students' interests and needs. The school's good partnership working has also been maintained and is effective in extending opportunities for students. Key Stage 4 and sixth form students are happy with their new courses. A measure of their impact in engaging students in learning is noted in recent improvements in students' attendance and punctuality to lessons. The wide range of enrichment activities, particularly through the school's media arts specialism, continues to make a good contribution to students' personal and social development and their enjoyment of school.

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Leadership and management across the school are satisfactory. The governing body and the senior leadership team support the headteachers' drive for improvement. Well-founded decisions to better match the curriculum to students' needs and the core of good practice in teaching and learning demonstrate the school has satisfactory capacity to improve. The school's evaluation of its performance is over generous but a more robust approach to planning is focused on the right priorities and reflects high expectations for students' achievement. However, the school's systems for monitoring and evaluation lack sufficient depth to fully identify the impact its work is having on students. The governing body is not evaluating the impact of its policies on students as regularly as it should and is not ensuring that all policies are in place.

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?

- Ensure that students make at least good progress in their learning by planning lessons that are tailored more closely to challenge all students.
- Ensure that leadership and management at all levels have greater impact by increasing the rigour of systems to monitor and critically evaluate the impact of actions on students' outcomes.
- Ensure the required policies are in place and the impact of them on students is evaluated thoroughly and regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the school with standards in line with the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A*-C grades, including both English and mathematics, has improved and is in line with national averages. Given their starting points, students make satisfactory progress overall. They achieve well in some subjects, such as in modern foreign languages, and in some of the specialist subjects but perform poorly in others, such as science, history and art. There are no significant differences in performance between different groups. The majority of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making satisfactory progress. Target setting has lacked sharpness, and in some cases challenge for individual students. The school has started to tackle this issue and more challenging and aspirational targets are currently being set. Students respond to well-structured tasks that challenge all learners, including the more-able. They make satisfactory progress in lessons and, where their tasks and activities are tailored more closely to challenge them, they make faster progress.

Students say they feel safe at school: there is little bullying and strong adult support. Students are clear about whom to go to if they have concerns and e-safety is well understood. Good adoption of healthy lifestyles is well demonstrated in students' participation in cycling to school and school sports. Sixth formers are usefully involved in running activities for younger students to help them improve their health. Improvements to dining facilities have led to more students taking healthy school lunches. School leaders are responding to students' and parents' and carers' concerns for the arrangement for lunches and building work is to take place shortly to increase the amount of seating available for students who eat packed lunches. Opportunities for students to produce the

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school magazine, join year, class and school councils, to act as peer mentors or listen to students reading, enable them to make a good contribution to their local community. Strong use of information and communication technology (ICT), enterprise activities and the professional quality of the work required in drama productions and in the fashion dresses they make in textiles, contribute to their good acquisition of workplace skills. Students' attendance is in line with the average and improving. Students' spiritual, moral and social development is nurtured well through assemblies and sensitive discussion of religion and moral dilemmas. Their awareness of cultures other than their own is developing adequately through the work taking place with their partner school in Ghana.

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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The best lessons engage students fully and help them to develop positive attitudes to learning and to enjoy their work. Students are clear about what it is they are learning and why. Lessons move at a good pace and tasks are highly relevant and well planned to progressively deepen students' understanding and knowledge. Teachers' questioning is probing and challenging. Teachers engage students effectively using their existing interests as a starting point. For example, when critically analysing poetry, students explored the relationship of Robin to Batman before applying the skills they practised to analyse the characters in a new unfamiliar context. Where teaching is weaker, tasks and activities lack challenge for all learners and lessons are over

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directed with a passive role for students. Too many lessons are like this and work planned is not tailored precisely enough to extend the more-able or to support students of lesser-ability. Assessment is developing and where it is most effective it is linked to National Curriculum levels or course criteria. Feedback to students is particularly strong where focused comments and diagnoses on how to improve are linked well to marking criteria. Good practice is emerging in a number of curriculum areas and in the sixth form.

The curriculum is dynamic and evolving well. It is broadly balanced and enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and educational visits. The school's specialism in media arts provides a good range of new courses, together with an impressive range of cross-curricular learning opportunities in Years 7 to 9. Arrangements in collaboration with other schools make an effective contribution to widening students' opportunities and access to different routes, such as apprenticeships and national diplomas courses in seven areas. These arrangements are very effective and are a distinctive feature of the school's provision.

Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable are effectively supported and the school's caring approach is well demonstrated in ensuring that systems are in place for them to have someone to talk to. Information, advice and guidance for students, for example, during transition into the school and to support them in moving onto the next stage of learning, are good. The majority of parents and carers, who expressed their views, felt the school met their children's particular needs. The quality of target setting in individual educational plans is a weaker aspect of provision. Monitoring of the progress students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make is not sufficiently rigorous.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a strongly motivated leader who, with the support of the leadership team, is driving forward a programme for improvement. Staff are motivated and keenly embracing training opportunities and initiatives to improve provision and outcomes for students. The school is making progress in sharing good practice to bring consistency to the quality of teaching, assessment and the work of middle leaders. Leaders and managers recognise that target setting is only adequately challenging and plans to introduce more rigorous measures are at an advanced stage. The regular, and otherwise effective procedures for monitoring teaching and learning, have not focused clearly enough on the progress students make. This means that the school is not sufficiently identifying the reasons for variations in the quality of students' learning.

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Support provided by the governing body is satisfactory. It is making effective use of members' specialist skills to sustain the school's work but has too little involvement in evaluating it. The governing body meets its responsibilities to ensure students are safe and safeguarding procedures are robust and meet requirements. Procedures for child protection are good and arrangements are well organised. However, the responsibility to ensure all policies are updated and reviewed is not being met. The governing body regularly receives data about the performance of groups of pupils it serves. No evidence of discrimination of different groups was noted during the inspection. Nevertheless, at the time of the inspection, the school did not have an equality of opportunity policy. The school is actively promoting community cohesion and work within the local community and through its link with a school abroad is having a positive impact on students' personal and social development. The school continues to make effective use of its partnerships to enrich the choice and access to learning for its students. The school has retained the overwhelming support of parents and carers. However, a large number of those who responded to the inspection survey feel that communication with the school is not as good as it should be and inspectors share this view.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students make good progress. Success rates are above average and their attendance is good. Students' contribution to the school is widespread and effective. For example, students say they enjoy their work to help younger students with their learning. Teaching and assessment are effective in promoting students' good progress. Students are involved as partners in their learning and are developing an active role in monitoring their own progress. Teachers' expert subject knowledge is used to good effect in well-structured feedback to students. Examples of excellent oral feedback and regular written comments were noted. This helpful guidance enables students to make high quality, personal

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responses, for example, in photography. Curricular provision is broad, regularly evaluated and personalised. Partnership arrangements promote access to courses and accreditation and are a positive application of the school's work to promote equality of opportunity. Leaders and managers make effective use of strategic links with consortium partners to benefit Cottingham High School students. Students value the high level of personal care they receive from their personal tutor and regular tutorials. Information, advice and guidance make a good contribution to students' development and are readily available.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
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

A much lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The majority of them hold positive views of the school. They are satisfied with almost all aspects of the school's work and the impact this has on their children's enjoyment and progress. However, a small proportion of parents and carers would like the school to assist them to better help their children's learning. A number of comments were received by email and in telephone discussions from parents and carers concerned about a range of issues that were linked to poor communication. All of these issues were investigated. The school are keen to resolve them. A minority expressed concerns about students' behaviour. Inspectors found that teachers and managers deal effectively with behaviour and students confirm that bullying incidents are rare and resolved quickly. Some parents and carers are concerned about the variability in teaching. Inspectors share these concerns and have made a recommendation to the school for improvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cottingham High 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 142 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1534 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	27	88	62	15	11	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	37	26	96	68	5	4	4	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	57	40	70	49	12	8	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	36	69	49	18	13	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	38	27	84	59	13	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	20	82	58	24	17	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	14	89	63	22	15	5	4
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)	36	25	75	53	14	10	4	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	26	74	52	17	12	7	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	20	71	50	22	15	11	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	11	75	53	25	18	12	8
The school is led and managed effectively	30	21	64	45	18	13	13	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	31	75	53	18	13	5	4

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 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Cottingham High School, Cottingham, HU16 5PX

Thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school and to those of you who took time to talk to inspectors about your experience of school or to complete questionnaires. I write to let you know what we found.

- The school provides you with a satisfactory education. The majority of you are making the progress expected and about a third of you make good progress. The new headteacher is leading the school well. She wants more of you to achieve the very best you can and has a clear plan to help you do so.
- The curriculum is good and the range of courses available to you is very wide, due to the good partnership links that the school has developed with other local providers. Many of you enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities, such as sports and drama, music and media performance. These have a good impact on your personal development. Your contributions to the school and local community are good. The magazine newsletter is impressive, as also is the sixth formers' involvement in contributing to younger students' learning.
- Teaching and learning is satisfactory in the school and good in the sixth form.

The inspection team has asked your school to improve further by:

- ensuring that leaders and managers at all levels have greater impact by increasing the rigour of systems to monitor and critically evaluate the impact school planning has on your outcomes
- ensuring teaching has greater impact on your learning by planning work that is tailored more closely to challenge all of you. You can help by letting teachers know when work is too easy or when you do not understand
- ensuring that the required policies are in place and the impact they have on you is evaluated thoroughly and regularly.

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector

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