

Yewlands School Technology College

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 107136 |
| Local Authority | Sheffield |
| Inspection number | 356096 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | John Peckham HMI |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 849 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Shaun Toulson |
| Headteacher | Mrs Angela Armytage |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 April 2008 |
| School address | Creswick Lane Grenoside, Sheffield South Yorkshire S35 8NN |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. A total of 43 part-lessons taught by 40 teachers were observed. Meetings were held with students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school in operation and looked at students' work, the school's records of assessment, policies and practices as well as completed questionnaires from 105 parents and carers, 167 students and 35 staff.

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

- The progress of students who have left the school in the last three years and those currently in the school, checking in particular that all groups such as the most able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, boys and girls are making similar progress.
- The quality of teaching and the ways in which teachers use their assessments of students' learning to plan their teaching.
- The quality of the curriculum and the extent to which it meets the needs of all students.

Information about the school

This smaller than average-sized school serves a mixed community to the north of Sheffield. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than in most schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than in the majority of schools. Most students come from White British backgrounds, with a very small proportion from other ethnic heritage groups. The school moved into new buildings between September 2008 and September 2009. Yewlands School has specialist status as a Technology College, and is part of a 'soft federation' with its partner primary schools and two sixth-form colleges. It holds the Investors in People Award, Healthy School status, the BECTA Kitemark for information and communication technology (ICT), the Sheffield Careers Kitemark and the Quality in Study Support Kitemark.

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

This is a safe, welcoming and supportive school. Excellent relationships between staff and students have created a culture where students from a wide range of backgrounds are encouraged to lift their aspirations and learn well. The school has made significant improvements since its last inspection, helped by an inspirational new building. Students respond to these improvements by behaving responsibly in lessons and around the school.

Most students enjoy coming to school and they make increasingly good progress. Attainment of most students on entry to the school is below average. In 2010, attainment for those leaving was average, and inspectors observed good progress in the majority of lessons. Most teaching is good or better, although there is variation in quality. School-wide assessment of learning and progress is good, enabling further assistance to be provided through an extensive range of extra lessons and individual support. In some cases, however, teachers do not take enough account of this information or their monitoring of students' progress within lessons and therefore, do not sufficiently adapt their teaching to ensure that all students can make good progress.

Students are well-supported by the school in all aspects of their overall development. They feel safe and are confident that the school will deal with issues such as bullying if it occurs. The school has exemplary practice in the overall safeguarding of its students and has extended its influence into the wider community to do all in its power to promote their care and well-being.

The school has adapted its curriculum well to offer a wide range of learning opportunities, centred very firmly on the best interests of students. There are pathways for the most able that will prepare them for university and beyond, and highly flexible and tailored programmes for students who do not enjoy school. There are however, some students whose low levels of literacy make it difficult for them to participate in some lessons and subjects. The school's current range of courses and qualifications does not provide sufficient opportunities for this relatively small number of students to make the best progress.

The school has effective systems for monitoring its performance and is accurate in its evaluation of current strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has a clear and consistent vision for the improvement of the school, based on sustainable and deep-rooted change which has taken place over the past few years. This commitment to providing a real gateway of opportunity for the students who attend the school is shared among the staff. As a result, the school's steady improvement has shown that there is a well-established capacity to improve still further in coming years. It is a measure of this improvement, that a significant number of parents and carers responding to the survey have raised their expectations of the school. They rightly feel that the school could provide

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more information about their children's progress and do much more to listen to their views and help them support their children's learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the ways in which teachers use their knowledge and understanding of students' progress, to shape learning opportunities better by:
 - providing a wider range of learning tasks and approaches in lessons, to enable students of all abilities to demonstrate good progress
 - improving the ways in which teachers check the progress of students in the course of each lesson, to ensure all students understand their work and are ready to progress
 - creating greater opportunities for students to discuss their learning and progress with each other
 - developing more active approaches to learning in some subjects.
- Develop more accessible qualifications and learning opportunities for students whose literacy or other skill development makes it more difficult for them to take advantage of opportunities within conventional routes.
- Promote a more constructive engagement with parents and carers that will:
 - empower them to feel more involved in the school
 - provide a wider range of strategies and support to enable them to help their children's learning and progress more effectively
 - enlist their support more fully in improving the attendance and punctuality of all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Most students enjoy their learning and can talk with enthusiasm about interesting learning experiences. They particularly like active lessons, where they can collaborate with others, and take up the many opportunities to use new technology. Inspectors observed students making good use of a wide range of new technologies, including tablet computers and remote controls for the interactive whiteboard. Students also appreciate the good access they have to computers around the school, so that they can complete work outside lesson time.

The school has a history of attainment which is below the national average, but there is clear evidence of an improving trend. In 2010, no groups of students underachieved and the majority made good progress. There is a well-developed system for tracking the progress of students which the school uses to set challenging targets, and to shape the additional support it is providing. Targets are communicated to students using a 'target zone' assessment sheet that students keep in their books; they have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and how high they should be aiming. Students found it more difficult to explain how they needed to improve their work. There are insufficient opportunities for them to discuss their learning and progress with each other, and to develop the language and skills of self-assessment. However, the majority of students are

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positive in lessons and are warmly encouraged to strive for improvement. In a girls' trampoline lesson for example, the teacher enabled students with widely-differing abilities to develop their skills by taking small steps of improvement. Girls watching were encouraged to provide constructive feedback. As a result, all students were able to make good progress. Although many students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, there is a small number whose basic skills in reading and writing make this more difficult and whose progress is less good. Most are keen to succeed and the school deploys other adults well to support their learning. Some students with very particular needs have benefited from some very flexible opportunities both in and beyond school to support their learning, such as the 'school within a school'.

In a very large majority of lessons observed, students' behaviour was good or very good, enabling learning to proceed well. Where behaviour was less good or poor, it was as a result of poor teaching. Most students have a strongly-developed sense of morality and fairness and they respond well to the school's rewards and sanctions policy. Some students, however, felt that it was easier to get rewards under this policy for improvement than for being consistently good. Students are very appreciative of their new school building and treat it with a great deal of respect. There is virtually no damage to the building or to the extensive range of information and communication technology (ICT) equipment available for students to use, even where there is minimal supervision.

Students feel that they are able to contribute to the school and the school council is active. A new uniform adopted at the time of moving to the new building was designed by students and is popular with them. There is a very effective system of encouraging older students to take responsibility as mentors or prefects, and these students are able to make a good contribution to the learning and personal development of younger members of the school. Most students have good ICT skills and they can also work effectively in groups. Attendance is improving and it is now in line with that of most schools. Fewer students are persistently absent. The punctuality of older students is good, but at Key Stage 3, too many students arrive late in the morning. Good guidance is available and there is a range of opportunities to find out about life beyond school.

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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 | 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

How effective is the provision?

There is some highly-effective teaching within the school, where high expectations of achievement, a brisk pace, the teachers' effective use of ICT and a variety of learning activities enable good or outstanding progress to occur. Support is well-targeted and all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities can make good progress. In a Year 7 history lesson for example, all students, including some with learning difficulties, were able to give a presentation to the class about the advantages of being in the Roman army. In nearly all lessons observed, students' work was marked regularly and thoroughly, and regular tests and other assessments provided students with good feedback on their progress. Not all teaching, however, is good. Some lessons have too much teacher-led activity and insufficient variety in the tasks and approaches adopted. More active approaches to learning are not employed in all subjects. This leads to the least-able students finding it hard to progress, and sometimes the most-able not being appropriately challenged.

The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities and this is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities which are appreciated by the students. Some Year 11 students for example, described undertaking their work experience in Spain as a highly-memorable event. Increasingly, students are able to sit examinations when they are ready, and can then use the time they would have spent continuing with a subject to good

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effect. For example, some Year 11 students who had passed their mathematics GCSE early were able to use the time to improve their grades in science.

The quality of care, guidance and support plays a key role in the improving outcomes for students at the school. Very consciously-designed systems to raise the self-esteem and aspirations of students help their overall good progress. For example, there are good links with local sixth-form colleges and students with academic potential are encouraged to visit universities and take part in a summer school. There are striking examples of how the school has enabled some students to overcome significant barriers to their learning, often through creative work with other organisations.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision for a caring and supportive learning environment is evident in the overall leadership and management of the school. Leaders at all levels are clear about their responsibilities and know they will be held to account for their results. At the same time, there are good opportunities for professional development and for less-experienced staff to take on new roles and make a significant contribution. For example, a revision to the school's behaviour policy was developed and promoted by a group of junior leaders. Students report that since its implementation, behaviour has improved significantly. School systems run efficiently and staff and governors are provided with high-quality information to support their work and decision-making. The governing body has a group of loyal and committed members who exercise their responsibilities well and hold the school appropriately to account. Specific, concerted actions are taken to promote equality, when individuals or groups are identified as doing less well. For example, in 2009, average-ability boys achieved less well than others. The school devised a programme to support their progress, which produced effective outcomes in 2010.

The school has made some efforts to engage with parents and carers, for example, in its recent consultation about possible academy status. A significant minority, however, felt that they were not well listened to, were not given enough information about their children's progress, or sufficient support to enable them to help them with their learning. The school has a very clear understanding of its community and has extended its exceptional safeguarding practice beyond school, and it plays a major part in the work of a range of other agencies working in the locality. Leaders from the school meet weekly with other organisations and there is a jointly-employed safeguarding manager who works across the family of schools. The school has also been able to use its technology specialism very effectively to shape a common learning policy across the family of schools,

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as well as to enrich the technological opportunities for all students. The school is effective in promoting community cohesion. This includes using the curriculum and display opportunities around the school to raise the awareness and understanding of cultures and faiths not represented in the immediate area.

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 |
| 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 | 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 | 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 |

Views of parents and carers

A total of just over 10% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire sent out as part of the inspection. The most consistent view expressed was that parents and carers wanted a more constructive partnership with the school. Many parents or carers wanted more information and to know how to go about helping with their children's learning. Inspectors' views on this have been included in the report.

Some parents or carers were worried that their children with special educational needs and/or disabilities were not receiving enough help. Inspectors were reassured that overall, the support provided to these students was good, apart from where, as described in the report, the curriculum did not fully meet their needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Yewlands School Technology 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 849 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 33 | 31 | 59 | 56 | 11 | 10 | 2 | 2 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 35 | 33 | 65 | 62 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 35 | 33 | 57 | 54 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 34 | 32 | 54 | 51 | 12 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 23 | 22 | 68 | 65 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 27 | 26 | 47 | 45 | 21 | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 16 | 15 | 77 | 73 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 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) | 31 | 30 | 62 | 59 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 29 | 28 | 65 | 62 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 26 | 25 | 56 | 53 | 12 | 11 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 10 | 10 | 63 | 60 | 13 | 12 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 21 | 20 | 70 | 67 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 39 | 37 | 49 | 47 | 12 | 11 | 1 | 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 | 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.



22 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Yewlands School Technology College, Sheffield, S35 8NN

Thank you for the pleasant way in which you welcomed and worked with me and the inspection team during our visit. We were very impressed by your behaviour during the inspection and by the way in which many of you take on responsibility to support the school and others. Your school is continuing to improve and you appreciate the opportunities that this gives you to learn and make progress. You told us that you feel safe and that you trust teachers to be able to deal with any problems that you might have. We agree with this and were impressed with the efforts that the staff of your school make, keeping you safe and helping you to do your best. There is a wide range of subjects and courses for you to choose from and we were pleased to see opportunities for many of you to find out about colleges, workplaces and universities to help you make good choices. You are also able to benefit from a wide range of clubs, visits and other activities.

You told us that you enjoy the teaching best when it is active, when you are able to use technology and when you have opportunities to work with others. We found that most of you have a clear idea of your targets and how you are doing in each subject, but that you found it more difficult to talk about what you needed to do to improve. We have asked the school to help you with this. Some of you told us that sometimes the work you do in lessons is difficult for some students and we have asked your teachers to look at developing some more courses. We have also asked them to take more note of how well you are learning in each subject and lesson in planning different learning activities for each lesson.

The support of your parents and carers is also very important and we have asked the school to develop more ways of strengthening the partnership between school and home to help you. In particular, we would like some of you to have encouragement to attend more regularly and on time.

I wish you the best of luck for your future and in any examinations or tests due soon.

Yours sincerely

John Peckham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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