

Woldgate College

92 Kilnwick Road, Pocklington, York, YO42 2LL

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Although students achieve well in a number of subjects, including English and science, they do not achieve as well in others, for example, mathematics.
- Progress in the sixth form, although improved, is not good. Although most students are successful in gaining their A level qualifications they do not always achieve the grades of which they are capable.
- While there is teaching that is at least good in all subjects, it is not consistently of this quality. As a result, students do not make good progress over time in all subjects.
- Teaching does not always meet the different needs of students in each class, particularly those with higher prior attainment.
- Marking varies in quality across the college and does not consistently ensure all students know what they need to do to improve. Generally, it is more effective at Key Stages 4 and 5.
- Leaders are not using the findings of monitoring and evaluation sufficiently well to improve teaching and ensure teachers' individual development needs are effectively met. As a result, the proportion of good or better teaching is not improving rapidly and this is a barrier to good achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Students are willing to learn and behave well in lessons and around the college.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through subject teaching and the wide variety of enrichment activities in which students are involved.
- An increased focus on students' progress has led to a rise in the number of students gaining the highest grades at GCSE.
- Leaders have taken effective action to address underperformance in the sixth form and mathematics, and built on the strengths in relation to students' behaviour and attendance identified at the last inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons, three jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors met with a group of students in Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 13 and, talked with students during lessons and at social times.
- An inspector also spoke to a group of Year 7 students about their reading.
- Inspectors met senior leaders, a group of subject leaders and a head of year, a group of teachers, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including school data on students' current attainment and progress, information related to their behaviour and attendance, the college's records from the monitoring of teaching quality and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 198 responses to the on-line Ofsted questionnaire (Parent View) and 82 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- At the time of the inspection, students in Year 11 and Year 12 were on study leave.

Inspection team

Katrina Gueli, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Phil Smith	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Kennedy	Additional Inspector
Mark Colley	Additional Inspector
Brian Hill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Woldgate College is much larger than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students supported through the pupil premium (additional government funding for children in the care of the local authority, children of parents serving in the armed forces and for students known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is broadly average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Most students are of White British heritage.
- A few Key Stage 4 students study courses off-site at York or Bishop Burton College.
- The college met the government's current floor standard in 2012 which sets the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- The college specialises in the performing arts and holds the Artsmark gold award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to ensure all students make good progress and achieve well by:
 - ensuring teachers consistently challenge all students, particularly those of higher ability
 - ensuring teaching actively engages students throughout the lesson and all activities make a strong contribution to learning
 - developing approaches to learning that inspire students and capitalise on their willingness to learn
 - making sure all marking is timely, provides clear guidance for students on how to improve and is used effectively to improve their future learning.
- Improve the leadership and management of teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers understand what they need to do to improve their teaching
 - linking targets in performance management more closely to the development areas identified in each individual teacher's practice
 - ensuring professional development opportunities meet teachers' individual development needs well
 - checking the impact of professional development opportunities and whole-school training on teachers' practice more robustly and using the findings more effectively to bring about further improvement
 - ensuring all those with responsibility for leading improvements in teaching have the necessary skills and qualities to have a rapid impact.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most students enter the college with attainment that is above that expected for their age. They make at least expected progress and as a result, their attainment is above average overall by the end of Year 11. In English, science, drama and religious education students achieve well because most teaching in these subjects is good.
- In 2011 and 2012 the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE was much lower than in 2010. In 2012, this was as a result of students making less than expected progress in mathematics and a failure to identify and support students who were at risk of not gaining at least a grade C in GCSE in English and mathematics. College data, including results from early entry to GCSE examinations, and students' progress in lessons confirm that attainment is set to improve in 2013. This is as a result of improved tracking of students' progress, targeted action to address areas of underperformance and better teaching over time.
- Achievement in the sixth form has been variable over the last three years. Following a successful year in 2010, achievement declined. This is being effectively addressed for students currently in the sixth form. The robust action of the new leader of the sixth form, working with a team of tutors, is ensuring students' progress towards their targets is closely monitored and remedial action is taken swiftly to accelerate progress where necessary.
- The college has used pupil premium funding effectively to narrow gaps in performance between those known to be eligible for free school meals and other students. In 2011, students known to be eligible for free school meals attained around one grade lower than other students in English and mathematics. In 2012, the gap narrowed to half a grade in English and three-quarters of a grade in mathematics. College data for 2013 indicate differences are set to be eliminated in English and the gap will continue to narrow in mathematics.
- The college makes use of early entry to GCSE examinations. This information is used effectively to raise attainment by identifying students who need to re-sit an examination in order to reach their target grade or have the potential to exceed it.
- The needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs within the college are being increasingly well met. Effective support in lessons, well-planned additional teaching and suitable course choices at Key Stage 4 are helping to narrow gaps in performance between these groups and other students in the college. As with their peers, they typically make good progress in English but their progress in mathematics requires improvement.
- The small proportions of students who attend off-site courses at York or Bishop Burton College are making good progress. Their achievement and well-being are monitored closely by staff.
- Year 7 catch-up funding has been largely invested in resources to support students to improve their literacy and mathematical skills with students completing a number of sessions each week either in school or by using the internet at home. Those interviewed were positive about how this was helping them to develop their skills but it is too soon to evaluate the full impact of this initiative.
- The college is using a range of strategies to promote students' interest in reading. Students interviewed expressed varying degrees of interest in reading.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- As at the time of the last inspection, teaching quality varies across the college. Although good teaching is now in the majority and a small proportion is outstanding, the amount of teaching judged by the college to require improvement is not continuing to decline over time. In part, this is because leaders have not been effective in ensuring teachers know exactly which aspects of their teaching need to improve, whole-school professional development has had only a modest impact and teachers have not received the individual help they need to improve their practice.
- The most common weakness in teaching judged to require improvement is teachers' ability to

use information about what students already know in order to match work closely to their individual needs. As a result, students say that some work is too easy and this prevents good progress, particularly for higher attaining students.

- In a small minority of lessons observed, teachers chose activities that kept students busy but did not result in good progress or create an enthusiasm for learning within the class. In other lessons students who are keen to learn, spent too long listening to the teacher rather than being actively involved in learning. At times, this teacher talk also limited opportunities for additional adults in the classroom to make a worthwhile contribution to supporting students' learning.
- The best marking clearly sets out for students what they need to do to improve. Equally importantly, students are then expected to use this information to make a difference to the quality of their subsequent work. Marking of this quality is in the minority and often, even where teachers do provide guidance for students, there is limited opportunity for them to respond, so lessening its impact. Discussions with students in different year groups and scrutiny of students' books indicate the quality and timeliness of marking improves as students move up through the college.
- Good or better practice was typified by a lively pace to learning in the lesson, effective use of prior assessment information to provide good challenge for students of different abilities in the class and well-chosen activities that promoted students' independence and involvement. In one drama lesson, the teacher's passion for her subject was a key factor in enabling students to make outstanding progress.
- Questioning was used very effectively by some teachers in order to challenge students' thinking and to deepen their understanding. This is an area where professional development for staff has had a more noticeable impact on teachers' practice.
- There is good attention to developing students' confidence to incorporate subject specific language in their work but sometimes teachers use resources that limit students' opportunities to develop other important literacy skills, such as extended writing.
- Year 13 students interviewed were very positive about the quality of teaching they receive. They particularly appreciated the considerable additional help and support they receive from staff when they are finding work difficult or in the run-up to examinations.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to one another and to learning. Students are typically polite, courteous and mature. Those interviewed appreciated the rewards and praise they receive for good conduct and felt they were valued as individuals.
- The college offers a safe, nurturing environment and students say they feel safe as a result. Almost all parents felt their child was safe in the college and this view was echoed by staff.
- The very best attitudes to learning were observed where teaching was the most effective. Even when teaching is uninspiring, students are accepting and cooperative.
- Students interviewed said bullying in the college is infrequent. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying and e-safety issues. They say homophobic bullying is rare. This is reflected in the college's record of behaviour incidents.
- There have been no permanent exclusions in the last seven years. College staff work extensively with those individuals who need help to improve their behaviour and there are notable examples of the success of this work.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is currently above the national average. The proportion of students who are classed as persistent absentees has declined, as a result of effective work with individual students and their families. Punctuality at the start of the college day and to lessons is good.
- Poor attendance in the sixth form in recent years had negative impact on students' achievement. Close monitoring of attendance in the current academic year has led to a very significant

improvement. Higher attendance and a stronger student work ethic are helping to improve achievement.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders have a clear understanding of the college's priorities for improvement, and have taken successful action to tackle underperformance in mathematics and the sixth form. Leaders have had less impact in other areas of the college, for example, improving the quality of teaching and ensuring all students achieve well. Behaviour and attendance have improved since the time of the last inspection.
- Many leaders are good teachers but they have not demonstrated sufficiently that they have the skills and expertise necessary to have a positive impact on improving the practice of others.
- The college uses lesson observation to check the quality of teaching and learning, but evaluation is not always used well to see if training has had an impact on teaching or to identify actions to bring about further improvement. When asked, teachers were often unable to say clearly which aspects of their teaching needed to be developed. There was no consistent link between the findings of the observation of their teaching and the setting of individual targets for performance management. There are a few examples where appraisal and performance management have been used robustly to challenge underperformance.
- Whole-college professional development has helped to improve teachers' use of questioning and recent introduction of peer coaching is helping to improve practice further. However, a significant minority of staff raised concerns through the Ofsted questionnaires that their individual professional development needs were not being sufficiently well met.
- Rigorous use of students' attainment data and an increased focus on checking whether students are making at least expected progress has raised teachers' awareness of the standards that students should achieve. At whole-school level and in departments, data are being used more effectively to identify and tackle students' underperformance swiftly. The college is promoting equality of opportunity effectively through its successful work to narrow gaps in performance between different groups of students.
- The local authority has increased its level of support for the college over the last academic year. This extra time has been beneficial in improving the accuracy of checks on teaching quality by subject leaders, supporting leadership development in mathematics and helping the college focus more sharply on the importance of high expectations for students' progress.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs and aspirations of students with a broad range of subject choices available. Alternative pathways and part-time off-site provision ensure all students at Key Stage 4 have a chance to succeed. The college's performing arts specialism brings richness to students' cultural experience and influences the approach to the many themed events and enrichment activities. As a result, students gain greater confidence and additional, valuable skills that help them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Safeguarding meets all current government requirements. Key aspects of safeguarding are monitoring carefully and frequently by a member of the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a detailed picture of the college's priorities and how areas for improvement are being addressed. Discussions with all staff and first-hand experience of the working life of the college have enabled them to develop a deeper understanding so they are better placed to make strategic decisions and hold leaders to account. With a decreasing number of students entering Year 7, adversely affecting the college's finances, the governing body is working closely with school leaders to make balanced decisions about staffing and the curriculum. Governors are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been spent and the positive impact this has had on narrowing gaps in performance. They know how teachers' underperformance has been tackled through the use of performance management systems.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118081
Local authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	401724

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	1,325
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Graham Cook
Headteacher	Jeff Bower
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2009
Telephone number	01759 302395
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