

Whitcliffe Mount – Specialist Business and Enterprise College

Turnsteeds Avenue, Cleckheaton, West Yorkshire, BD19 3AQ

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From well-below average starting points when they join the school, students make good progress reaching levels that match closely to average standards by the end of Year 11.
- Students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium make the same good progress as their peers and the gaps between their performance and that of other students are narrowing.
- Most of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers have positive relationships with students and set high expectations for what they can achieve.
- Students feel safe and behave well in lessons and around the school. This creates a welcoming environment that promotes learning.
- Students readily participate in a wide range of school activities and clubs and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Leaders and governors have maintained a firm grip on raising standards, through increasing the quality of teaching and promoting the effective use of data to track progress. Middle leaders make a strong contribution to ensure continued improvements at subject level.
- The governing body has strong local connections and good skills. Governors have an accurate understanding of performance across subject areas and hold senior leaders and heads of department to account with rigour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Challenge in lessons is sometimes inconsistent and students, in particular the most-able, are not always provided with work that maximises their learning. .
- Students do not always respond well enough to feedback to improve their work.
- In some lessons, there are too few opportunities for students to develop their learning skills through paired or group work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 47 lessons, taught by 46 teachers. Five lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors observed an assembly, met with seven groups of students, eight members of the Whitcliffe Mount school governing body and a representative of the local authority. Several meetings were held with members of the senior leadership team, including the headteacher, as well as, the literacy coordinator and the special needs coordinator, heads of subjects and heads of year.
- Inspectors took account of the 44 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 85 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and looked at students' exercise books, student attainment and progress data and tracking for all year groups, the school's self-evaluation of its performance and the school development plan. They also scrutinised a range of school policies and documentation in relation to safeguarding, child protection, behaviour and attendance, performance management and governance.

Inspection team

Geraldine Hutchinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Henderson	Additional Inspector
Michael Blaylock	Additional Inspector
Mary Lanovy-Taylor	Additional Inspector
Denis Oliver	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Whitcliffe Mount is a larger than average secondary school that now caters for students in Years 7 to 11. It has had specialist status as a business and enterprise college since 2004.
- In 2012, the school entered the final phase of reorganisation from a 13 to 18 to an 11 to 16 years school as part of the local authority reorganisation of middle schools. In September 2011, the sixth form was removed and in September 2012, an additional 850 students entered the school in Years 7, 8 and 9, along with 35 new staff, including 11 newly qualified teachers. In this transition period, while the school converts and stabilises to an 11 to 16 school, the numbers in year groups remain variable: there are currently 347 students in Year 11 and 176 in Year 7.
- The school has a new headteacher who joined in September 2013 following the retirement of the previous headteacher.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and the children from service families) is around average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is above average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below average, as is the proportion of students from minority ethnic heritages.
- A small number of students attend alternative provision.
- The school is spread across a large site in numerous separate buildings. A rebuilding programme is planned.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all is at least good and more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that staff plan lessons to ensure that every student is stretched and challenged, especially the most-able
 - making sure that students have more opportunities for paired and group work to help them to develop their learning skills
 - making sure systems to ensure students respond to teacher feedback and marking comments are followed more consistently in every subject area.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by conducting a review of the curriculum to ensure it meets the needs of students in an 11 to 16 years school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the last three years the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen steadily and is in line with the national average. This represents consistently good achievement from students' starting points which are below average on entry to the school. School predictions for 2014 show improvement is continuing for all student groups.
- The proportion of students making and exceeding the progress expected of them compares favourably with national levels, and especially in a school where students currently in Year 10 and 11 joined the school in Year 9. The progress being made from below average starting points in a short space of time is especially significant. Most parents who responded to the online questionnaire Parent View are very satisfied with the progress their sons and daughters are making.
- There is variable performance in subject areas such as modern foreign languages and science where students have arrived at school in Year 9 with little or low-level subject knowledge. In these cases, the catch-up required to achieve national levels by end of Year 11 is more challenging and this partly accounts for the below national performance in these areas. For students who have more recently joined the school in Year 7 and 8, the longer time available for them to gain the skills and knowledge which will be necessary for maximum success in GCSE courses is helping to boost progress levels. The school has just entered its second year as an 11 to 16 school and predictions based on Year 7 to 9 data show that progress and achievement levels are increasing.
- As a result of the effective use of pupil premium funding for one-to-one tuition, catch-up courses and extra revision support, the achievement of students eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is rising, in both English and mathematics. Pupil premium students reached standards in 2013 that were under one GCSE grade from other students. Rising school predictions for 2014 show that while the gap between these students and their peers may increase slightly, it will still be in line with national levels.
- Due to the careful and individual support they receive, the progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs is in line with their peers.
- The school monitors closely the small number of students who attend alternative provision and these students achieve as well as their peers.
- There is a strong focus on students' literacy development through effective use of the catch-up funding and this is ensuring that students are given greater opportunities to reinforce their literacy skills and to be able to understand and use specific subject terminology in subjects such as science and history.
- The school does not enter students for final GCSE examinations until Year 11, when the school is confident they can reach the highest standard of which they are capable.
- Changes to students' target-setting have ensured a sharper focus on setting higher targets in subjects, so that each student works at a higher level to make faster progress. This increased attention on data tracking is ensuring that increasing numbers of students are making more than expected progress and the school demonstrates that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. The school is aware of and taking effective action to further promote the progress of the most-able students.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching in both key stages. There is still a small proportion of teaching that requires improvement but in over three quarters of lessons observed teaching was good or better. A majority of parents and carers who

responded to the online questionnaire are very satisfied with the standard of teaching in the school.

- Relationships between teachers and students are good and teachers know their students well and set appropriate targets. In some cases, teachers do plan for appropriate extension work to maximise learning for students who are most-able, though this is not consistent across all subjects.
- Students who learn more slowly have good additional support in lessons from teaching assistants who work effectively alongside teachers. Teachers also use strategies in some lessons such as, specific seating plans, so they can support students more easily in lessons and providing key words and prompt sheets to help understanding through more difficult tasks.
- Students are motivated well in lessons where there are opportunities for active participation to develop their own ideas. For example, in a physical education lesson where Year 7 pupils were given leader tasks to observe and record results and then to coach other students to improve their skills in badminton. Progress made in this lesson was very good.
- Students respond well when they work in pairs and groups, are challenged to extend their skills and are set clear targets, with teaching prompts to help them. For example, in a performing arts lesson, Year 10 students rose to the challenge of improvising behaviours for selected day-to-day scenes. Working in pairs, they were able to develop a script and then to perform for the rest of the class showing the confidence they had developed and their skills of improvisation.
- Teaching is very effective when students are allowed to find out answers for themselves. In a small minority of lessons, teachers spend too much time explaining unnecessarily what is required and pace slows, so that students get less opportunity to complete their work and, as a result, make less progress.
- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always require students, particularly the most able, to think more deeply about subjects they are studying.
- Students' written work is marked regularly and teachers give effective feedback that explains what they need to do to improve their work. There is some evidence that students respond to this feedback to make corrections, however, this is not a consistent feature across all subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school, including in outside areas where there is less teacher supervision. Students move around the school sensibly and safely at lesson changes, giving due regard to the one-way systems that are in place because of the narrow corridors and spaces in the older parts of the building.
- Students say they feel safe in school and this is confirmed by parents and staff. Students are aware of who to go to when they do need help and talk positively about the support they receive from their tutors and pastoral leaders.
- Students have a good awareness of all forms of bullying and know the action that they can take to minimise the risks to themselves and others. The school recently had an anti-bullying week that encouraged open discussion about a wide range of issues including cyber-bullying. Students understand e-safety and how to avoid risky situations. They also spoke positively about the anti-bullying champions, who are students who have had special training so that they can help others who may have a problem and need someone to talk to. Students say that there is little bullying and that if it does happen, the school deals with it effectively and immediately. The majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire positively indicated that the school deals effectively with incidences of bullying.
- Students show respect to each other and adults in the school. They show caring and sensitivity to others both in lesson situations and around the school. Year 7 students at break time spoke positively about how, when they joined the school, they were helped by others and quickly made new friends.
- The development of students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills is a strength of the

school. This is promoted through students' participation in a wide range of school events, clubs, activities and trips that are timetabled to take place in every week of the school year. Students talk positively about opportunities to develop sporting skills, their musical talents, to join clubs and to take part in community events and fund-raising. The school choir performs with members of the community for special events such as a carol service for parents, teachers and friends of the school. Students gain confidence from active participation in events such as the 'dragons den competition' where they can pitch their own ideas to a panel of judges.

- The school encourages students to take an active role in school improvement by feeding in their own ideas. The student voice representatives meet regularly and take on leadership roles where they put forward the views of their group. They have helped to introduce changes to school systems so that sanctions are more effective at managing behaviour. Students now have just two warnings rather than three, before more serious sanctions are implemented. Student voice representatives say this was one of their ideas and that it has improved behaviour in lessons.
- Attendance has improved steadily over the last three years from well below to above average.
- In school, provision for vulnerable students to manage behaviour is effective and has reduced fixed-term exclusions significantly.
- The school has made good links with primary feeder schools and provides opportunities to smooth the entry of students to secondary education so they settle in quickly. This includes leading on a two week summer event when a show is produced involving around 200 students.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and governors share an aspirational vision for the school and have driven forward improvements and the successful transition from a 13 to 18 to an 11 to 16 years school since September 2012. The changes that have taken place have been on a large scale requiring strategic leadership skills and vision to bring together all of the new staff and students into one cohesive community. Just one year into this transition, the success of this work is evident in the current smooth running of the school, in the sustained upward trend in achievement and progress and in the successful integration of many new teachers and large numbers of students to the school community. The overwhelming majority of responses from parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire are wholly positive about the quality of education provided.
- The appointment of a new headteacher in September 2013 has ensured that the pace of change remains a priority. Robust and rapid actions have been taken to sharpen up the accuracy of monitoring of teaching quality and to ensure that middle leaders are fully accountable for implementing school improvements for the areas that they lead. Several audits and reviews have been conducted for example, in science, and design and technology, as well as the updating of the school self-evaluation and of the school development plan.
- The school leadership team and governors have ambitious targets for the next phase of work to establish Whitcliffe Mount as an outstanding 11 to 16 secondary school, which sets out to 'inspire to enjoy, achieve and to celebrate'. They recognise that to achieve this requires further improvements and consolidation of those that are in place including, a review of the curriculum to ensure it better meets the needs of students aged 11 to 16 years so that they all develop a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.
- Leaders across the school, including middle leaders have made a significant contribution to the improvements that have taken place and there is strong team approach. Middle leaders are held strongly to account for improvements in the areas that they lead and say that the 'school agenda is our agenda'. They present as a positive and motivated group who are pleased to be taking on the challenge of leadership and to be working alongside senior leaders and governors.
- The school is very aware of its strengths and also the areas of teaching and performance that require most improvement. In the case of science, the school has appointed a new head of department and has completed a rigorous review. School leaders are driving forward changes to schemes of work, teaching and to assessment practices at a rapid pace. While the outcomes of

some of these changes are at a development stage and measuring impact will take place later this year, leaders' determination to succeed is very evident.

- There is a focused improvement in the use of tracking data to drive up standards of progress and achievement throughout every subject area, led by middle leaders. The new headteacher is adept at maintaining a team approach balanced with high expectations. This has had positive impact on the pace of change, on greater accuracy of monitoring and more rigorous tracking and monitoring.
- Monitoring of teaching is regular and rigorous and there are many opportunities for teachers to receive feedback on their teaching from colleagues and also to share good ideas. Professional development is now better targeted so that teachers are improving their teaching skills all of the time. The school is developing a stronger and more focused continuing professional development programme, using internal best practice and coaching to further support and develop teachers' skills.
- Performance appraisal arrangements have been reviewed and the systems in place are very rigorous and every member of staff has a personal target and a school-wide improvement target which ensures that accountability is spread across the school.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. This has been especially relevant in the review of the performance of subject departments and in the monitoring of the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and of students' achievement and behaviour. They use data adeptly to pinpoint issues and to challenge school leaders on the quality of outcomes. Governors have a wide range of experience and skills that ensure a number of specific committees effectively challenge and support the school. The curriculum committee meets with all heads of department and especially for any areas that are underperforming. Leaders are held rigorously to account and are set robust targets to achieve. The finance committee and a dedicated governor monitor the use and impact of the pupil premium funding, on raising standards and progress for those students who are eligible for support through this.
 - Governors have a separate pay and performance management committee that applies the revised performance management policy. This committee ensures that salary progression is strongly linked to quality of teaching, students' progress and achievement and that financial reward is only achieved when rigorous performance targets are met.
 - The governing body has provided very effective support to the school during a period of major change. It is evident that this challenge and support has been significant in consolidating an upward trend in raised standards and successful school improvement.

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	107780
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	425680

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,318
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Pinnock
Headteacher	Jennifer Templar
Date of previous school inspection	5 May 2011
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