

Spenn Valley High School

Roberttown Lane, Liversedge, West Yorkshire WF15 7LX

Inspection dates

10–11 January 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and his senior leaders are driving improvement in the quality of teaching, middle leadership and pupil outcomes effectively.
- Professional development and performance management have improved teaching.
- Teachers plan lessons well and use resources effectively to stimulate interest and promote the learning of pupils with different abilities. Teachers use assessment effectively to overcome gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers question pupils well to challenge them and deepen their thinking.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Attendance is average.
- A supportive culture and good communication promote pupils' personal development and welfare successfully.
- Pupils benefit from an effective programme of careers education that prepares them well for their next stage of education, training or employment.
- Pupils of all abilities make as much progress as similar pupils nationally. In 2016, pupils' progress in GCSE mathematics was significantly above the national average. Pupils achieved well in their option subjects at key stage 4.
- The overall progress of disadvantaged pupils was not significantly below other pupils nationally in 2016.
- In 2016, pupils, including the disadvantaged, did not make enough progress in science and French. In addition, boys' progress in English was below average.
- Improved leadership and teaching has resulted in current pupils learning effectively in English.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of subject leadership to ensure that:
 - effective strategies in science teaching are used more consistently to promote challenge, learning and progress
 - good teaching in French results in good progress.
- Improve the progress made by boys in English.
- Ensure that disadvantaged pupils make consistently good progress across different subjects by:
 - providing extra support activities that target their academic needs more accurately
 - evaluating the impact of pupil premium and catch up programmes more precisely.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has clear values, strong drive and provides effective leadership. His high expectations have created a positive environment for pupils' learning and personal development. Senior leaders have taken effective action to overcome the weakness in mathematics identified at the last inspection. Mathematics is now a strength of the school.
- The strong senior leadership team hold middle leaders to account well. They provide effective mentoring and support for newer middle leaders. Senior leaders are robust in managing performance and in tackling any weaknesses in teaching and leadership.
- Staff have a strong sense of belonging and shared purpose. Staff value the professional development they receive, including from other teachers in school, and say it has improved the way they teach. Leaders deploy coaching effectively to overcome areas of particular weakness.
- Senior and middle leaders use external consultants and other schools well to learn from good practice and to keep up to date with the latest developments in the curriculum and assessment. The local authority has provided effective external support, particularly for the development of mathematics.
- Leaders have sharpened the assessment and tracking systems. Leaders and teachers use assessment information effectively to inform their actions. Due to national changes in attainment grades, the school's progress data does not presently provide a reliable measure of current progress. Leaders are keeping parents well informed about these changes.
- Teachers use 'personalised provision sheets' to identify the needs of particular pupils in each class and the action they are taking to promote their progress. This approach contributed to improved outcomes in 2016. Teachers say that this method has been effective in focusing their attention on meeting pupils' individual needs. Not all teachers apply this system with equal rigour.
- Leaders have adapted the curriculum appropriately to meet changes in the national curriculum, qualifications and assessment. Leaders continue to place a high value on sport for all, religious education and personal, social, health and careers education. These contribute well to the breadth and depth of pupils' experience and to pupils' preparedness for life in modern Britain.
- The enrichment programme is well planned, involves outside agencies, and teachers are well supported by specialist staff. Pupils have good opportunities to gain credits for participating in activities out of school. A new leadership programme is increasing the participation of pupils in running school events.
- The curriculum is under continuous review and senior leaders are making well-informed and well-considered decisions about the curriculum at both key stages. Subject leaders in mathematics and English are providing strong leadership of the curriculum.

- In mathematics, the subject leader tailors the curriculum for each class so that the teacher focuses sharply on the assessed gaps in learning identified in the regular assessment tasks. High-quality leadership of the mathematics curriculum has contributed directly to the strong outcomes in mathematics.
- The school uses special needs funding effectively. Case studies of individual pupils show the evidence of the positive impact of extra support by teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Leaders have established a consistently high level of staff awareness of the actions needed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have a strong relationship with alternative providers and robust procedures ensure that pupils' safeguarding, attendance and progress are secure.
- Leaders have deployed pupil premium funding appropriately. However, leaders are aware that the extra support had not, in the past, been targeted sharply enough on eligible pupils. This limited the impact of extra support. Leaders have introduced more focused and flexible support this academic year. They have also planned an external review of the pupil premium funding to assess how its leadership and management may be improved.
- The spending of Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up funding has successfully promoted reading for pleasure at key stage 3. Leaders have correctly identified that the analysis of the impact of this funding on the progress of the weakest pupils, boys and the disadvantaged, is not rigorous enough and have taken steps to rectify this.

Governance of the school

- Governors know about and understand the actions taken to bring about improvement. They regularly receive reports from middle and senior leaders and visit lessons with school leaders to gain first-hand information. These activities enable them to increase their knowledge about the implementation and impact of actions. They regularly check aspects of safeguarding, health and safety, including e-safety. They have a clear understanding about how pupil premium and catch up funding is spent. They do not have a detailed enough analysis of the impact on the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils, or of the weakest pupils in Year 7, because reports do not link measures of impact closely enough to specific programmes of work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Good teamwork between pastoral leaders, the safer schools officer and leaders with responsibility for safeguarding reinforce the strong culture of vigilance. The personal, social, health and ethics education programme is well organised and systematically counters risks to pupil welfare, including online safety and sexting. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Leaders are thorough in their approach and staff work effectively with outside agencies to support vulnerable pupils. Leaders are rigorous in making sure that pupils at alternative provision are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers use their good subject expertise to plan well-structured lessons. Teachers use a wide variety of resources that stimulate pupils' interest. Carefully planned tasks support and challenge learners of different abilities to succeed in their work.
- Teachers' enthusiasm motivates and challenges pupils to participate and work hard. Effective questioning prompts pupils' thinking and extends their understanding.
- Teachers use the information they have recorded about particular pupils' needs effectively to question them and support their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants use the information they have about pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities to provide consistent and effective support across different subjects.
- Teachers manage behaviour well. Expectations of good behaviour are high and routines are well established. Expectations of presentation and handwriting, however, are not consistently high.
- Teachers' consistent application of the school's assessment policy is helping pupils to improve their work. Pupils are developing the capacity to learn from mistakes by assessing other pupils' work and by regularly correcting and revising their own work.
- Teachers use imaginative and practical activities to develop understanding. For example, pupils' understanding of environmental issues in geography was deepened by demonstrating how well a model shanty town withstood a deluge of water.
- Teachers often use homework productively to extend and consolidate learning.
- Teaching focuses strongly on preparing pupils for examinations. Teachers use their good knowledge of examination requirements to teach essential skills and understanding. Productive booster sessions meet particular learning needs effectively. Teachers use assessment very well in mathematics to identify particular gaps in knowledge and, as a result, teaching focuses precisely on meeting pupils' identified needs, including for the least and the most able.
- Teaching is not consistently good in science and modern foreign languages.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a well-planned programme of personal, social, health, careers and ethics education that contributes effectively to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils develop their appreciation of moral issues, British values and cultural diversity. Specialist staff provide new staff with helpful training in dealing with unfamiliar or sensitive issues.
- Pupils say they feel safe and can talk about what they have learned about how to be safe, for example sexual health and the dangers of drugs. They say there is little bullying. Pupils know who to report any concerns to and are confident about the response from adults.

- The school is open and sensitive in helping pupils deal with a wide range of personal difficulties. For example, a display of powerful stories by named pupils explains how the school supported them in dealing with their personal circumstances such as homosexuality, being bullied, eating disorder and mental health.
- A well-planned and comprehensive programme of careers information, advice and guidance is in place from Year 7 onwards. The specialist careers adviser supports tutors well in delivering the careers programme. Pupils are encouraged well to aspire to university. The use of employers is effective in developing pupils' understanding of the world of work and their employability skills. Pupils value the work experience in Year 10. Staff identify additional barriers facing disadvantaged pupils and take extra steps to ensure they stay in education, employment or training. The proportion of school leavers not in education, training or employment is low and the percentage that gained an apprenticeship is above average.
- Leaders responsible for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities support and monitor their progress with great care.
- The school ensures that pupils at alternative provision are safe. Robust procedures are in place to check attendance. School staff visit regularly to check the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' progress.
- Most pupils are confident and willing to contribute to lessons. Most take pride in their work, their school and their appearance. On occasion, a few are passive and lack confidence.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has a positive and inclusive atmosphere. This encourages mutual respect and calm communication.
- Behaviour around the school is orderly. Adults supervise movement between lessons well and deal with any incidents of spirited behaviour effectively. The introduction of staggered breaks and lunchtimes has reduced the number of behaviour incidents outside lesson time.
- Pupils understand the behaviour policy well. They say teachers apply it consistently and fairly and that there is a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Behaviour is mainly good in lessons.
- Pupils are generally positive about their lessons and arrive well equipped. When working independently they focus on the task with good concentration. When working on tasks with others they collaborate well.
- Attendance is broadly average and shows a small improvement when compared with this time last year. A range of pastoral staff play a constructive role in contacting families to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well and attend regularly. The school's on-site provision for pupils with particular needs helps individuals to improve their attendance and progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The overall progress that Year 11 pupils made in the 2016 GCSE examinations was in line with the national average. The most able, and pupils who had low and middle prior attainment at key stage 2, made similar progress to these groups nationally.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education, training and employment. A higher-than-average proportion gain an apprenticeship.
- In 2016, the progress that pupils made in GCSE mathematics was well above the national average. Pupils with low prior attainment made especially good progress, including the least able disadvantaged pupils. The current Year 11, including the most able disadvantaged, are on track to replicate this success in 2017.
- In 2016, pupils did well in the open element of GCSE examinations because of the strengths of teaching in a wide range of foundation subjects that pupils take as options at key stage 4.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the current Year 10 and 11 are making good progress towards their GCSEs.
- Courses at alternative provision are appropriate for the very few pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. Pupils on these placements are making appropriate progress towards their targets.
- In 2016, the progress that Year 11 pupils made in English was below average, including by boys and by disadvantaged pupils. This was due to past inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Over the last two years, the new subject leader has taken effective action to improve the curriculum and assessment in English. Good teaching and assessment of current pupils is resulting in effective learning.
- Pupils' progress in GCSE science was below average in 2016. This was due to difficulties in moving from vocational to GCSE science courses for all pupils, some weakness in leadership and some inconsistency in teaching. Leaders are dealing with these issues effectively.
- Outcomes in modern foreign languages have been poor due to weaknesses in teaching and leadership. Very few of the current Year 11 have chosen to study a modern foreign language. Following leaders' effective actions, a larger number in Year 10 are taking French and are making expected levels of progress. Leaders are tackling effectively the aspects of teaching and leadership that require improvement.
- The use of pupil premium funding has been beneficial overall but has not had enough impact for particular pupils in particular subjects. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining at least a GCSE grade C in both English and mathematics has risen over the last three years. However, it remains well below others nationally. In 2016, the overall progress made by disadvantaged pupils was not significantly different from others nationally. However, their progress was significantly weaker in English and science.
- Catch-up funding provides extra support for reading for all key stage 3 pupils and has resulted in increased amounts of reading. However, leaders have not evaluated the impact on progress in literacy by weaker pupils, the disadvantaged and boys.

School details

Unique reference number	107778
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10024008

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	888
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Simon Kelly
Headteacher	Ian Ellam
Telephone number	01924 405 451
Website	www.spenvalleyhighschool.co.uk/
Email address	office.spenvalley@kirkleeseducation.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2013

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average.
- The school uses the following alternative providers for a very small number of pupils: KCSA College, Bumpy Limited and Ethos College.
- In 2015, the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all years and subject areas. Observations were carried out jointly with two senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and talked to them about their learning and their experiences at school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. An inspector visited an alternative provider.
- Inspectors checked the school website and evaluated a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, information about pupils' progress, and behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records.
- The inspection took account of 23 responses from parents, including a few written comments, and 42 responses from staff to the Ofsted online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Bernard Campbell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stephen Crossley	Ofsted Inspector
Gordon Watts	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Morgan	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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