



Ridgewood School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106789
LEA Doncaster
Inspection number 277631
Inspection dates 22 February 2006 to 23 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Bill Keast CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Barnsley Road
School category	Community		Scawsby
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Doncaster, South
			Yorkshire DN5 7UB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01302 783939
Number on roll	1315	Fax number	01302 390448
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Hall
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2000	Headteacher	Mr C Hoyle

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	22 February 2006 - 23 February 2006	277631

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated on the northern edge of Doncaster. Pupils live in an area with broadly average social and economic indicators. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for a free school meal. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with identified learning needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school hosts a small local authority resource for visually and hearing impaired pupils. Specialist engineering school status was gained in September 2003.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that this is an effective school. It provides good value for money. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. They learn and achieve well as a result of good teaching although there is some variation in quality between subjects and key stages. Personal development is good and the pupils are prepared particularly well for their future economic well-being. The curriculum is good because it meets the pupils' needs well and it is evaluated regularly. Specialist school status has had a particularly beneficial impact on the range of courses and extra-curricular opportunities. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils with visual and hearing impairment are integrated and supported effectively. The school is well led, with a clear and shared vision to do the very best for all pupils. Self-evaluation accurately identifies areas for development and the planned actions to tackle these issues are proving to be effective. Issues identified in the previous report have been tackled effectively. Since then, many innovations and improved systems have benefited pupils' education and increased their achievement. The school has shown that it has a good capacity to make further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

The school should:

- continue to implement its planned developments
- use the outcome of the school's self-evaluation to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching, assessment and planning by ensuring the best practice is shared throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils join the school with above average standards of attainment and in 2005 their achievement was good.

The results in the Year 9 English, mathematics and science tests in 2005 were above average, although not as high as in the two previous years. The school has set higher targets for this age group for 2006 and all indications are that pupils are making good progress and the targets are likely to be met.

At GCSE, the proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C grades was significantly above average and is improving. Moreover, the proportion of pupils not gaining a qualification has been consistently below the national average for the last five years. In 2005, results were particularly high in art and drama but particularly low in French, compared to the national average. However, in French, the school entered more than double the national proportion of the year group. Pupils made considerably greater progress in information and communication technology (ICT) compared to the other subjects they took. The school met its challenging targets for this key stage.

Those with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities at school action level made outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good attendance and punctuality, and their good attitudes to learning, demonstrate their enjoyment of school. They feel safe and are confident that they will learn effectively. Positive relationships ensure a mutual respect within lessons and pupils' good behaviour around the school clearly demonstrates their acceptance of the school's expectations. They are considerate and thoughtful, so that newcomers to the school can settle in quickly and comfortably. Pupils feel that the school meets their needs and the school council gives them a say in the way it is managed and developed. In lessons, pupils collaborate well and listen to each other. As they move through the school they appreciate the demands that teachers make, and the advice and guidance that they give.

The school's clear discipline system has a positive effect on pupils' good social and moral development. The wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' enjoyment of school life. The recent improvements to catering arrangements have added momentum to the development of healthy lifestyles. Activities developed through the school's engineering specialism significantly enhance pupils' understanding of life after school and give good opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to their local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress during their time in the school. Good relationships help create an effective learning atmosphere. Lessons are well planned with a variety of suitably challenging activities, including some good use of ICT. A clear starter activity, in most lessons, engages pupils' interest and leads well into the main learning activity. In the best lessons, teachers spend the last few minutes reviewing what has been learnt. Teachers' good subject knowledge is helping them to have confidence in using a wider range of teaching approaches. The effective emphasis on pupils thinking for themselves, most evident in history and geography, is not used consistently across all subjects, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Good progress has been made in developing marking methods and pupils feel they are getting useful feedback on how to improve. Marking in English is particularly effective. Good practice in peer and self-assessment is developing. Teaching is most effective in Years 10 and 11 and the school has identified the need to ensure that those methods which work best are used more consistently. The school has identified reasons for the slower than expected progress made by Year 9 pupils in 2005

in science and mathematics - both subjects which perform well in the upper school - and is taking action to improve the situation for the current year group.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets statutory requirements. The flexibility it affords meets all learners' needs well, particularly through academic and work-based courses offered in Years 10 and 11. The AS product design course offered to higher-attaining Year 11 pupils is effective and innovative. Regular review of the effectiveness of the curriculum leads to appropriate changes as seen, for example, in the remodelling of the modern foreign languages provision. Personal and social education is part of the curriculum but does not sufficiently engage the interest of the older students. Numeracy across the curriculum is a noted strength; however the school recognises that cross-curricular literacy has not kept up with best practice. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is good. Weekly activities, such as music, sports and academic support and extension, are well attended. The range of annual events is particularly wide, offering pupils many excellent opportunities to work with other pupils or in teams on projects and challenges. Active partnerships with local engineering industry, other schools, colleges and universities, all developed through the school's specialist engineering status, support the taught curriculum and enhance the extra-curricular learning opportunities very effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good mesh of support for its pupils. Requirements for child protection are in place, and staff are very alert to individual needs. As one boy commented, 'Teachers bond with anyone new to the school so that they settle in really easily.' Pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying or harassment will be dealt with effectively. The comprehensive Pupil Performance Management system gives both pupils and teachers regular feedback on achievement, effort and behaviour, and quickly throws up any issues of concern. Its potential as a powerful evaluation tool for both teachers and pupils is still being explored. Pupils are guided well through their choice making processes for courses in Years 10 and 11, and educational opportunities post-16.

A combination of well-judged additional teaching and effective use of teaching assistants provides outstanding support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A carefully managed range of additional support for vulnerable pupils, combining good relationships with both external bodies and parents, complete this network of support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school's continuing success is underpinned by good leadership and good, well planned, management. The vision and drive of the headteacher, who has made significant changes to the structure of responsibilities since he came two and a half years ago, are evident at all levels. Teachers and other staff are very clear, both about the support they can expect from senior colleagues and about their own responsibilities. The senior leadership team works closely with middle managers, many of whom have had effective and valued training for their roles. The school's specialist status is very well managed so that its positive impact is felt in all areas of the curriculum, in the resources available and in the work of the many partner schools.

The headteacher has a very good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The improvement plan focuses on raising standards for all pupils and its few priorities are succinct and appropriate. Departmental planning based on the same priorities is clear, though departments are not all equally rigorous in the way they approach self-evaluation. Parents' views are sought on specific changes and they have further opportunities to express their opinions, in a more general context, through questionnaires at parents' evenings. The school acts effectively on what its evaluation reveals about the success of initiatives or the progress of pupils.

The school has an effective governing body that works hard to support the school. Governors are not complacent and challenge the leadership to improve the already good results. They have ensured that the school meets all requirements, except a daily collective act of worship, and work closely with the school to see that finances are well managed.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, your school and your interests and concerns.

We found that your school gives you a good education and that you make good progress. You told us you enjoyed being at school and that you felt safe. We agree that your school takes good care of you. We saw that you behave well, that you and your teachers get on well together, and that you work hard in lessons. Your school offers you a good curriculum with a wide choice of subjects in Years 10 and 11 that prepares you very well for life beyond Ridgewood. The learning opportunities you have outside the classroom are particularly good. The quality of teaching is good although it does vary. Regular marking ensures that you know how well you are doing and is increasingly giving you better guidance on how to improve your work. At the moment, some teachers are better at this than others. Your teachers have a good understanding of the needs of those of you with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and, together with the support staff, very successfully help you in your learning.

Your school is well led. Your enthusiastic headteacher knows what he wants for you so that you have the best education possible. He and your teachers are working together to bring in changes and developments to achieve this. The specialist engineering school status has had a very important impact on your experience at school.

We think your school can continue to improve and your standards can be even higher. To achieve this we have asked your teachers to make sure that they carry through all the developments they have already planned, and to eliminate the current differences in teaching, planning and assessment.