



# Wickersley School and Sports College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106955  
**LEA** Rotherham  
**Inspection number** 277669  
**Inspection dates** 15 March 2006 to 15 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Ian Richardson HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Bawtry Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Wickersley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Rotherham, South Yorkshire S66 1JL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01709 542147
<b>Number on roll</b>	1786	<b>Fax number</b>	01709 703364
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Sally Underwood
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Hudson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	15 March 2006 - 15 March 2006	277669

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two inspectors who met with members of the senior leadership team, subject leaders, students and the chair of governors and observed a range of lessons, tutorial periods and students' activities at break and lunch time. Inspectors also scrutinised the range of school documentation and evaluated the school's data on students' achievements.

## Description of the school

Wickersley is a larger than average community comprehensive school. The school became a Sports College in July 2002 and is in the process of being part rebuilt and part refurbished under Private Finance Initiative arrangements. The school's facilities are used extensively by the community for sports activities and adult education. The large majority of students are of white British ethnic origin. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The proportion of students who join or leave the school during the years of compulsory education is lower than the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Wickersley School and Sports College is a good school with many outstanding features. It is very effective at providing students with a good quality education. The school's self evaluation accurately identifies this. The school has a very strong focus on making it possible for students to achieve the best possible outcomes. The efforts of staff and students have resulted in a strongly improving picture, with results at Key Stage 3 and GCSE significantly above the average when compared with similar schools.

Outstanding management and leadership of the school ensure the strong focus on learning. Through visionary leadership and very effective management, excellent systems have been put in place to support the students in their efforts to learn. The school is also providing well for the care and guidance of students, and this is reflected in the very positive response from parents given through the questionnaires they completed for the inspection.

The systematic approach taken by the leadership and staff leads to thorough review through effective measurement and evaluation of progress. These systems are coherent and create a responsive and robust environment for learning. The review process leads to rational planning for development which is well communicated and understood by the staff. The school provides good value for money.

Students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because their needs are identified clearly and their progress is checked effectively.

There has been good progress since the last report which is being built upon showing a clear capacity to continue to drive up standards.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The clarity of purpose and drive for improving learning that has been so effective for students aged 11-16 is now in the process of being applied to the sixth form. Students' success at GCE A level is already slightly above the national average, but the school is not content with this. They have implemented changes to bring about robust management of learning in the sixth form and are measuring the impact of this on the progress of students.

Inspectors support the school's view that provision in the sixth form is satisfactory.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

This school know how well students are doing because of its systematic and rigorous analysis of their achievements. This information is used forensically to review the

impact that development planning has had and it knows where it wants to make further improvements.

Students are making good progress across a broad range of subjects with achievement well above average overall and standards at GCSE rising at a rate well above that seen nationally. Where less positive performance is identified the school plans promptly for improvement. For example, in Key Stage 4 the school has recognised the underperformance of a particular group of girls and has taken action to bring about improvement.

In the sixth form the standards achieved by students are not as high as for students aged 11 - 16, but are still above the national average. The senior leadership team has recognised the need to raise further the standards in the sixth form.

Strategies and targets for improvement are clear and well-communicated to students and staff and permeate the whole school. From talking with students it is very clear that their knowledge of these targets helps them understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. The high priority given to using assessment in a consistent way to improve students' learning continues to be one of the keys to the good standards achieved in this school.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students behave well and confidently contribute their ideas, or ask questions. They are keen to learn and really enjoy lessons that stimulate them and allow them to take responsibility for their own learning. Students understand how they are expected to behave and know what will happen should they not do so. They attend regularly and parents overwhelmingly agree that their children enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.

Students' moral, social and cultural development is good. The school helps them to broaden their horizons by taking part in a wide variety of activities, including a plethora of sporting and musical events. These activities are fruitful in improving the self-confidence of students. Students express their opinions through the various forums and the school council. The school values and generally acts upon their views.

The new 'whole school food policy' is being spearheaded by the chair of governors and, combined with the high level of sporting activities offered, is already contributing to a healthier lifestyle for students and staff. Students are keen to take responsibility. Older students contribute to the excellent work of the learning mentors by helping younger students and those that are feeling less happy or confident. Through the school's work as a specialist sports college, links with partner primary schools and the local community are strong.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Learning is at the heart of everything the school does. Students learn and achieve well because of consistently good teaching. This is a school where goals are shared and teachers strive to improve their performance as well as that of their students. There is no room for complacency at Wickersley. Through increased use of accurate data, teachers ensure that all students make good progress in lessons. Teachers employ a variety of learning strategies so that students are able to take greater ownership of their own learning and make better progress.

Lessons have good pace and students diligently apply themselves to their work. Students check their own progress and openly discuss and evaluate how well they are doing. Teachers are particularly skilled at evaluating the learning that has taken place and helping the students to understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to further improve. The work of the schools' learning mentors is highly valued by students and staff and contributes greatly to students' achievement.

The quality of teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory. The strong emphasis on learning seen in the main school is less apparent in the sixth form, and students sometimes feel "talked at" by the teachers. However, senior managers are already tackling this issue.

Assessment of students' previous work and standards is used really well to ensure that teaching is closely matched to what each student can achieve. Relationships are strong and learning is undertaken in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Consequently students and staff work in partnership to achieve the highest standards.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum is good. There are suitable plans for extending the range of learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11 as part of a wholesale review for the next academic year. As a result of the school's commitment to its specialist status all students take GCSE sports studies in Years 10 and 11. A strength of the curriculum is the Personal, Health and Social Education course which is particularly effective in the delivery of health, sex and drugs education. The outstanding range of out of school activities is very well attended by students and enhances the overall work of the school. Sixth-form students are presented with a good choice of subjects and courses that they value and enjoy. The school has reviewed the quality of some sixth form courses on offer and has modified the range to ensure better quality.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with parents that students are safe and well cared for. Effective arrangements for safeguarding students are in place and regularly reviewed. The quality of care to ensure the well-being of students is strong and students value the help provided by the pastoral staff. The learning mentors and the inclusion officers are very effective in supporting students who find it hard to make the most of what the school has to offer. Careers information is good and students receive timely information to help them make suitable choices. A real strength is the academic guidance and support offered to students. The school's analysis of performance data is highly accurate enabling teachers and other staff to give valuable advice to students on how to improve their work. Teachers set targets for learners and refer to them in lessons so students know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to achieve the next grade. There is a real sense of ownership of the school's determination to attain 75% of 5 or more A\* to C GCSE grades in 2006.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. There is substantial evidence of improvements made as a consequence of the visionary leadership and rigorous management of the headteacher and senior leadership team. The latter forms a coherent group who share the same views of education which they communicate very effectively to staff and students. At the core of the school are 'high expectations' and this is emblazoned on the school badge and seen in practice.

The school knows itself well. At the heart of management activity is the clear belief in the effectiveness of monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the work of the school whether it be in learning matters or the pastoral care of students. The data collected is done so purposefully and it is used well to analyse successes and areas for improvement. The governing body of the school has been well engaged in the school's self-evaluation and has a clear part to play in raising standards further. There is much evidence that the leadership and management of the school have good capacity to improve.

The senior leadership team ensures that measurement of outcomes and activity is firmly in place. Discussion with staff and subject leaders affirms a clear view on school and subject development that is shared and well understood. Effective communication promotes consistently good practice in managing areas of the curriculum. Subject leaders feel in control of their curriculum area and know that they are accountable for standards. Students are undoubtedly benefiting from this coherence.

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## Inspection judgements

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

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Mr Briggs and I enjoyed our visit to your school on 15 March to carry out an inspection of the quality of education you receive. We met with groups of students for discussions, and also met students in classes and around the school at break and lunchtime. We talked with the headteacher, leadership team and teachers about their work. We want to thank you for the way you received us and talked freely about your views and thoughts about the school and your education.

The school is providing you with a good education. We were particularly impressed with how much hard work goes on in your school, and we congratulate you and the teachers for it. We were pleased with the way you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. The good co-operation between you and the teachers is the key to your success.

One of the ways that success is measured is through tests in Year 9 and GCSE examinations in Year 11. You are doing significantly better in these tests and examinations than similar schools. You are successful also in the way you behave in classes, take on responsibilities and try hard to support others. Those of you who are in the older classes described life in school as 'masses better' than when you joined the school. You should be proud of your achievements and the very hard work your headteacher and staff have put in to making things better. They are very good at their jobs. They have identified the need to improve consistency of standards in Years 7 to 9 and to improving learning in the sixth form.

I feel confident that you will want to carry on the good work and make sure that, with your teachers, Wickersley will do even better. It says on your badge 'high expectation'. May I wish you well as you all try to do even better?