



High Storrs School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107139
LEA Sheffield
Inspection number 277716
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr John Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	High Storrs Road
School category	Community		Sheffield
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		South Yorkshire S11 7LH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2670000
Number on roll	1600	Fax number	0114 2663624
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms M Browes
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2000	Headteacher	Ms E Talmadge

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	277716

© 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 three of Her Majesty's Inspectors, and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

High Storrs School is a large multi-ethnic comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 19. It has 1,588 pupils, of whom 397 are in the sixth form. It is a popular school and is oversubscribed. A higher number of pupils than usual speak English as an additional language, and over a quarter of the school's population are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are lower than average. Few pupils come from homes experiencing economic hardship, and pupils' levels of attainment when they enter the school are generally high. High Storrs is a specialist school in the performing arts. It has leading edge status, Investors in People, Artsmark Silver and Careers Mark accreditation.

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 that its effectiveness and efficiency are good. The school provides a good education for its pupils and has many strengths. It is well led and managed, and provides good value for money. Overall standards in examinations and tests are high, and outstrip national averages significantly. The vast majority of pupils make good progress. There are certain groups of pupils, however, notably some from black minority ethnic backgrounds and those for whom English is not their first language, who could do better. The school has acknowledged this and has put in place a number of strategies to tackle the issue.

Ensuring the personal development and well-being of pupils is a strength of the school. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported; behaviour is exemplary and attendance is good. Teachers establish an excellent climate for learning and there are outstanding extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities for pupils. They have good opportunities to take responsibility, exercise leadership and take a very full and active role in school life, which is impacting on the running of the school. Some very good work is done in the community and excellent links exist. Teaching is good and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced since the last inspection. Nevertheless, pupils' awareness of their progress and what they need to do to improve is underdeveloped, as is the extent to which the best practice in teaching, assessing and monitoring pupils' progress is shared throughout the school.

The school has made other significant strides forward since the last inspection. The school's specialist status has given it a distinctive character and ethos, with particular benefits in stronger community links and curriculum developments, including opportunities for enrichment. Overall general certificate of secondary education (GCSE), general certificate of education advanced level (GCE A-level) and Key Stage 3 results continue to rise, and the gap between the best and less well performing subjects is closing. The school is self-critical and reflective; it has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The school considers the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form as good, but inspectors see it as outstanding. Standards are above average and the recent GCE A-level results are the best in the school's history. Students value the many opportunities they have to voice their opinions and to take responsibility in all areas of school life. The curriculum comprises an impressive range of academic courses, but the school needs to complement this with a wider range of vocational courses. Teaching is outstanding and staff have a profound knowledge of their subjects. Leadership and management are very effective and teachers are fully committed to ensuring that their students are challenged to succeed and supported when difficulties arise.

What the school should do to improve further

Focus on:

- evaluating and refining the current strategies to tackle the underperformance and progress of some groups of pupils from black minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils whose first language is not English
- use the leading departments in the school more systematically to share good practice and stimulate improvements in teaching, assessment and monitoring and evaluation
- introduce more explicit procedures to raise pupils' awareness of their progress and to reinforce what they need to do to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The overall standards achieved by pupils are high. At Key Stage 3, results in 2004 placed the school in the top 21% of all schools nationally, with those for mathematics in the top 4%. Standards of numeracy and literacy are exceptional, but achievement in science is not as good. Overall progress is above average. However, the attainment and progress of some groups of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those whose home language is not English are slower than other groups in the school, and they do less well than they should. Examination and test results for 2005 show continued improvement, particularly for certain pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Nevertheless, their relative progress is still less rapid than other groups in the school, although the gap is closing.

Key Stage 4 GCSE results place the school in the top 26% of all schools nationally. There is no significant underperformance by specific groups of pupils, and the percentage of pupils gaining no passes continues to fall. Overall progress is good but, again, the same groups of pupils do less well than they should.

At Key Stage 5, overall attainment in GCE A level examinations is well above average, and the percentage of A to B and A to E grades continues to rise. Attainment is significantly above average in a number of subjects. In vocational certificates of education, however, overall attainment is below average. The 2004 Advanced Level Performance System analysis placed the school within the top 25% for the value added to pupils' performance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and most are socially adept. Development of their spiritual awareness is good, while their cultural and multicultural development is very good. Most pupils enjoy school and value the opportunities provided for them. Their achievements are celebrated. Relationships with staff are very good and pupils value the school's commitment to stamping out racism and bullying. Older pupils support and mentor younger ones. They have a voice in what happens to them and their role in the school's development and improvement is outstanding. The vast

majority of pupils behave very well around the school and in lessons. They show very good attitudes to learning. The school works hard, and successfully, to meet the needs of the small number who show signs of disaffection. Attendance is good, as is punctuality overall, although some sixth formers do arrive late to some lessons. The school benefits from good leadership on healthy living. Many pupils benefit from taking part in a wide range of sporting activities, with several making the national squads. Enrichment opportunities are plentiful. Pupils make excellent progress in developing the personal attributes that enable them to contribute to society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The inspection team agrees with the school that teaching overall is good. This is based on the good levels of progress made by most pupils and was confirmed by a sample of lesson observations. A small proportion of the teaching observed was excellent, especially in the sixth form. There was almost no unsatisfactory teaching and this represents an improvement on the previous inspection.

The most effective teaching had a number of clear features. Expectations were high and teachers involved pupils fully in their learning, for example, asking them what they wanted to learn or how they would measure success. The best teaching was also based on secure subject knowledge, which was presented energetically and enthusiastically. These lessons featured a range of strategies that kept pupils engrossed.

Lessons that were merely satisfactory tended to be pedestrian and were teacher dominated. Too few risks were taken despite the very positive attitudes of pupils, who are mostly very keen to learn and capable of working independently. Pupils were not always clear about how to improve their work; there was sometimes a lack of guidance in marking and subject teachers did not systematically set targets for what the pupils were to learn. Certain groups of pupils may do less well because of these factors together with insufficiently consistent monitoring, underdeveloped assessment and target setting, and a lack of targeted support in lessons.

Monitoring of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. New systems use a wide range of evidence, including comments from pupils. Some areas of teaching have improved as a result of action taken, and the school has a clear view of the improvements in teaching needed, including assessment for learning and creativity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Curricular provision in the main school is outstanding and is complemented by the wide range of enrichment activities, including subject and sports clubs, and residential

and performing arts activities. The curriculum comprises a variety of suitable academic options and also an increasing number of vocational courses, some of which are delivered in partnership with other schools and neighbouring colleges. Personal, social and health education and citizenship and careers are delivered by specialist staff.

The curriculum in the sixth form is good and there is a large number of academic courses, well matched to students' interests and ambitions. Students receive comprehensive careers advice and support for entry to higher education. The extended curriculum is a strong feature and offers tuition for the Duke of Edinburgh Award, critical thinking, general studies, information technology and sport. Again, performing arts options are popular. However, the vocational element of sixth form provision is rather narrow and needs to be extended if it is to meet the needs of all students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. In particular, the role of form tutors has developed to include monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance. Problems are identified and extra support provided, for example, for completing coursework. Good support is given to pupils as they move through the school, and in making choices about Key Stage 4 courses and their post-16 education.

The school provides a variety of support aimed at the differing needs of pupils. Pupils with hearing impairments are integrated well in lessons but also helped through specialist withdrawal. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, especially through targeted intervention programmes, although for some pupils little classroom-based support was provided during the inspection.

Pupils feel safe, and that they can turn to teachers for support when necessary. The school deals rigorously with incidents of bullying and racism and has exemplary procedures for health and safety and supporting vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's headteacher left the school at the end of last term; the deputy headteacher held the role of acting headteacher during the inspection. Leadership and management of the sixth form are very effective and a number of high quality systems have been developed to support pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has a large and able senior team, who share a sense of vision and purpose and have the capacity to secure the school's further improvement. They have a passionate commitment to the well chosen key areas identified as the school's priorities. There is a clear understanding of accountability at all levels and the senior staff have

a generally accurate view of standards and progress. As a result, the school's self-evaluation is good overall. However, the school's strategies for monitoring and evaluation are not based on a sufficiently strategic analysis of the school's progress in raising the standard of teaching, and of its progress towards its key priorities. A decision to move to a more rigorous system for monitoring and evaluation was made only shortly before the inspection, and is not fully embedded. The school's analysis of its exam and national test results is thorough, but it has less certainty about pupils' progress in Years 7 and 8. There are good links with the local authority and with local primary schools, with a number of staff involved in partnership work with other secondary schools in the area. The governing body is committed and diligent; it analyses information presented to it carefully and ensures accountability. It has an effective committee structure which focuses on the school's priorities, and individual governors bring a wide range of useful skills to the school's leadership. Financial planning remains sound and a previous small deficit has been eradicated; value for money is good.

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	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
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	insufficient evidence

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

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We were able to visit lessons and to talk to a number of you. We also read the results of questionnaires completed by you and your parents; they were very helpful to us.

Here is a summary of our main findings which I hope will be of interest to you.

- The school provides you with a good education, and an outstanding education in the sixth form. The results you get in tests and examinations are well above those in most schools, and you are particularly good at English and mathematics.
- You enjoy coming to school and work very hard in lessons. Your behaviour is excellent and your attitudes to learning and to your teachers are positive.
- You have a great choice of subjects and activities to pick from, and are well supported by staff in making option choices.
- Your sixth form is outstanding. Teaching is excellent and you achieve superb results in examinations. You are well supported and guided, and there are many and varied opportunities to take part in activities other than your academic studies. However, we think you could be offered more vocational courses.
- The school cares about your personal safety, development and well-being. It deals swiftly with incidents of bullying and racism and provides you with good guidance on a range of issues.
- The headteacher and other senior staff run the school well. They know what needs to be done to make the school better, and are working very hard to achieve the necessary improvements. They seek your and your parents'/carers' views, and take account of your suggestions and concerns.
- The teaching you receive is good and the opportunities for you to take part in a range of activities such as music, dance, performances and sport is much better than in many other schools.
- A proportion of you don't do as well as you should and a few of you arrive late for lessons.
- Not all of you are fully aware of how well you are doing and exactly what steps you should take to do better, and some departments are better than others at getting you to learn and be creative.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Use some of the best departments in school to help the others to make lessons interesting, exciting and enjoyable, such as using more information and communication technology (ICT), different learning techniques and allowing you to take a more active role in lessons.
- Keep you better informed about the progress you are making and set you clear improvement targets, which include precise guidance on the things you need to do to get to the next stage in your development.
- Introduce more effective ways of helping and supporting those of you who are not reaching your potential.

We feel the school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and that with your help even more progress can be made in the future.