



Wetherby High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108088
LEA Leeds
Inspection number 277899
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Sonya Williamson HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Hallfield Lane
School category	Community		Wetherby
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Yorkshire LS22 6JS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01937 522500
Number on roll	1058	Fax number	01937 522504
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr M Bosomworth
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Ms A Barnes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wetherby High School is an average sized specialist technology college catering for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 with 145 students in the sixth form. Just less than 90% of pupils are White British and almost all speak English as their first language. The school serves a market and commuter town to the north of Leeds city centre. Four out of five pupils live in areas where the percentages of high social class households and of adults with higher education are above the national levels. Pupils enter the school with slightly above average attainment. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wetherby High judges itself to be a school which provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils and inspectors agree. It is a popular school with some elements of good practice in management and teaching and learning but there are also areas that require significant improvement to ensure consistently good practice. The school does not consult widely with parents and pupils or act upon their views but recognises the need to do so more in the future. Personal development and well-being are satisfactory and behaviour observed during the inspection was good, despite concerns expressed by a significant minority of parents. Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Although pupils receive good pastoral support, not all pupils are supported sufficiently well with learning. This is because not all teachers make enough use of assessment information to plan lessons to meet the individual needs of pupils. The curriculum generally meets statutory requirements and the needs of learners. Although standards of attainment are slightly higher than the national average in Key Stages 3 and 4, achievement of pupils could be better in all phases. Through their monitoring of teaching, learning and achievement, most leaders and managers know where strengths and weaknesses in subject departments occur. The newly developing leadership team have the capacity to ensure that improvements made since the last inspection can be sustained and built upon. The evidence seen in the inspection shows that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and that pupils are on track to achieve challenging targets. Technology college status has brought about improvements to teaching and learning resources, the curriculum and partnership working. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school and inspectors judge this to be a satisfactory and improving sixth form. Students receive good advice when choosing courses and considering university entrance. Academic progress is tracked well and students are aware of their targets. The curriculum generally meets the needs of students but enrichment activities are insufficient. The accommodation does not meet the needs of mature learners, inhibiting independent study and social development. Students have responsibilities for younger pupils but activities are not always sustained. Standards are below average at advanced supplementary (AS) level and almost average at advanced general certificate of education GCE A2 level. Achievement is satisfactory and there is a picture of improvement, particularly at A2 level. The school is aware of underachievement at AS level and recognises that some students' needs would have been better met with more vocational courses, which the school is pursuing for next year. Students say teaching is good and data supports satisfactory teaching overall, with very good teaching in some subjects. None was seen during the inspection because of examinations. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the head of sixth form has a clear agenda for further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise levels of achievement across all phases of the school
- make more effective use of performance data to ensure that learners' individual needs are met
- continue to monitor the quality of management and teaching and learning so that consistently high quality can be achieved
- consult more widely with pupils and parents and consider their views as part of self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall both in the main school and the sixth form. Pupils enter the school with slightly above average attainment. Through Years 7 to 9 progress is satisfactory and, by the end of Year 9, attainment is still above average, though the progress of lower attaining pupils is not consistent across all subjects. In 2005, attainment at the end of Year 11 was above average but with areas of underachievement, particularly, but not exclusively, amongst higher attaining pupils. The school acknowledges that standards in some subjects could be higher and has introduced appropriate actions to improve achievement that are meeting with some success. The school's data indicate that GCSE performance this year will be above national averages. Lessons seen confirm this.

In the sixth form, although students enter with standards in line with national averages, the 2005 AS results showed considerable underachievement. The school has identified the causes and has begun to address them. The expectation, based on the school's data, is that results in 2006 will improve, though still not reaching national averages. Standards at A2 level remain average.

Across all years, a good proportion of pupils meet their adequately challenging targets and attain the standards expected when set against their capability and starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, though lower attaining pupils overall make less progress. The school is improving its use of assessment information to set appropriate targets for pupils and to track their progress against them to raise achievement. However, systems are not yet universal and consistent.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The majority of pupils conduct themselves in a courteous and considerate manner. They have positive attitudes. Behaviour is good and pupils are sensible in situations where safety is important. However, a significant minority of parents perceive that the poor behaviour of some pupils hinders the progress of others. There are some opportunities for pupils

to take responsibility, including serving on school councils. However, the impact of these councils is not fully developed to ensure the pupils' opinions are used to help inform future planning. There are lost opportunities to promote pupils' self-esteem and independent thinking and learning skills.

Attendance is slightly above average. Pupils feel safe and enjoy their education. They are beginning to respond to the school's encouragement to adopt healthy lifestyles but this awareness is not always apparent in their choice of food at lunchtime. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the community, through fundraising for good causes. Opportunities to develop work related and other skills that will contribute to future economic well-being are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and this concurs with the school's view. There is a significant amount of teaching with good features; however, this is uneven in subject departments. In outstanding lessons, strong direction and carefully planned activities delivered with enthusiasm gave pupils the confidence to rise to challenges and achieve well. In good or better lessons, teachers paid attention to ensuring that pupils clearly understood what they were about to learn and how the activities would help them to achieve that learning. In some subjects, pupils are helped to assess their own learning so they understand the next steps, but data and careful tracking of academic progress are not consistently well used. As a result, pupils do not always know their targets, nor is their progress reviewed regularly enough. In satisfactory lessons, teaching did not always meet the needs of the full range of learners and work was pitched to the middle ability. In a small number of lessons that were not adequate, pupils did not have a clear idea of what they were expected to know or why they were asked to do the tasks. Insufficient support was given to meet individual needs; consequently pupils became disengaged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. In Years 7 to 9, it is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils. The impact of the use of information technology, supported by technology college status, is beginning to enhance pupils' progress across all subjects. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum effectively fulfils the diverse career and personal aspirations of pupils. It does this by offering courses that cater well for pupils of all abilities, including those pupils whose best interests are not necessarily served by traditional academic routes. GCSE subjects are augmented by vocational GCSEs and a range of vocational subjects, some of which require off-site provision. In the sixth form, a widening vocational and collaborative provision, including specialist information and communication technology (ICT) courses

of study, such as data modelling, enhance the academic provision. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory. However, programmes for enriching pupils' lives, particularly in the sixth form, are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school judged the care, guidance and support given to pupils as good; but inspectors find it to be satisfactory. Procedures are reasonably well established and pupils appreciate the support they get. Positive relationships exist at all levels. Pupils, including the vulnerable and those in public care, receive sensitive and responsive help from learning mentors and other professionals. Arrangements to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriate. However, not all lower attaining pupils are sufficiently well supported to meet their needs. Child protection arrangements are in place and understood by staff. Appropriate health and safety and risk assessment systems are monitored. The guidance pupils and their parents receive at the end of Years 9 and 11 when making option choices is satisfactory. The Salvation Army operates a popular on-site facility where pupils go to socialise and seek guidance and support. There are some areas of accommodation that are in a poor condition. This has a negative impact on the quality of the learning environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leaders and managers of the school are providing clear direction which is beginning to bring about improvement and promote the focus on raising achievement. The newly developing senior leadership team are aware of inconsistency in several aspects of the care and education provided by the school. Although they have appropriate plans to address this, the impact of their plans on raising achievement and improving teaching and learning is not yet consistent. Leaders and managers have a growing awareness of the need for increased accountability of all their staff. Some are successfully using monitoring information to help them plan well chosen developments. The best managers are closely monitoring the effect of new plans on achievement and the quality of teaching and learning through the increasing use of performance data. However, the pupils and parents of the school are not sufficiently consulted or informed to be able to make a contribution to the school's evaluation of itself. The school promotes inclusion and tackles issues sensitively. Staff are specialists in their subject areas and teaching and learning are enhanced by links with initial teacher training providers. The school is making good use of its specialist technology college status to enhance resources, particularly in ICT, to bring about improvements in teaching and learning and to promote pupils' enjoyment. The governors support the school well by carrying out their responsibilities and providing satisfactory challenge. Long standing financial constraints have limited improvements to the quality of the accommodation. Finances are now better and the school provides satisfactory value for money and has made

satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. The strong drive to raise achievement through close monitoring, carefully chosen priorities and the focus on accountability indicates that the school has the capacity to continue to improve.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
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 the contribution you made towards the inspection of your school. You spoke to us with confidence and expressed your opinions well. We particularly liked the courteous and polite manner with which you conduct yourselves around the school and the fact you clearly enjoy your education.

We want to tell you about our main findings and the strengths of the school.

- We agree with your school's own judgement that it is satisfactory overall.
- The senior leaders understand what needs to be done to improve the school and have started to put good plans in place.
- Most of the teaching is satisfactory but a considerable proportion is good.
- Your behaviour is good and you conduct yourselves safely.
- Your teachers give you good support to help you do well in the future.
- Students in the sixth form receive good care and guidance.

The things that would best help the school to improve are:

- increasing the progress that all of you make so that you achieve the standards that you are capable of
- making better use of information about how well you are doing so that teachers can meet your needs in lessons
- the senior teachers should continue to monitor that the staff they are responsible for work to a consistently high quality
- you and your parents told us that you would like to be consulted more widely and have your views considered. We agree that this would help the school when planning new developments
- you can all help by continuing all the good things you do and talking to your teachers to make sure you know your learning targets and what to do to reach them.

We each wish you good luck for your futures.