



Horsforth School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108092
LEA Leeds
Inspection number 277901
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr James Kilner HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Lee Lane East
School category	Community		Horsforth
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Leeds, West Yorkshire LS18 5RF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2265454
Number on roll	1410	Fax number	0113 2265401
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roland Meredith
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr S Jex

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	28 September 2005 - 29 September 2005	277901

© 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

Horsforth School (Specialist Science College) is an 11-18 co-educational community comprehensive on the North West outskirts of Leeds. The school's 1410 pupils include 249 students in the sixth form. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average and there are 3.1% of pupils for whom English is not their first language. There are 11.4% of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities.

The school is heavily oversubscribed and above its designated admission limit in all year groups. Horsforth works closely in partnership with a number of providers and is a member of North Leeds Networked Learning Community. The school has developed extensive global links.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Horsforth School is a good school with some outstanding features. There is a firm commitment to the head's clearly articulated vision of 'Opportunity and achievement for all'. This, together with the school's Specialist Science status, provides a high quality, safe and rich environment within which pupils enjoy their learning. Good teaching, which clearly sets out to target pupils' progress, and an improved, more personalised curriculum contribute to the school's good performance. Self-evaluation is honest and there is good understanding on the part of governors and key staff as to where performance needs to be improved.

Pupils reach high standards and make satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. Standards and progress reached by students in the Sixth Form are at least satisfactory. Pupils have great confidence in the good quality care and guidance given by the school. Whatever their backgrounds, pupils feel safe and enjoy school. The overwhelming majority of parents have great confidence in the work of the school in leading their children to success.

The school is well led and effectively managed, ensuring it provides good value for money. A very committed and knowledgeable governing body is instrumental in ensuring high levels of quality control and provide energetic support.

The school has successfully addressed all the points from the previous inspection and standards have risen over recent years. There are many innovative and successful strategies for quality assurance linked to raising attainment. These are not yet consistently applied by some staff. The school recognises this and is well placed to apply more rigour to their systems in order to realise its commitment to 'Opportunity and Achievement for all'.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The school had judged provision in the sixth form as good; inspectors found it to be satisfactory. Students are very positive about the support and guidance they receive and are encouraged to become independent learners. Time out of lessons is used productively and students play an important part in the life of the school. Pass rates at A-level are around the national average, but there are significant variations in the performance of students across different subjects. Able students add value above local and national norms; however, a minority of less able students do not achieve the grade expected of them. Achievements on vocational courses are very good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Students make reasonable progress in lessons and most are challenged appropriately. However, in less successful lessons, there is too much reliance on the teacher. The use of data to monitor progress and manage course performance is sound, but not applied consistently. The sixth form curriculum is broad and there is a good range of courses, including a small number of vocational options.

What the school should do to improve further

In order to further improve progress and achievement the school should:

- Continue to improve the existing quality assurance procedures in order to ensure a consistent and systematic approach to monitoring, evaluation and intervention in:

teaching and learning; and

assessment for learning

throughout school, including the sixth form.

- Continue to improve the progress made by sixth form students in relation to their GCSE results.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall the standards are high and rising, although there are fluctuations and differences between subjects and key stages. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their standards are above average. Pupils build on this and make at least satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3 in English and mathematics. In 2005 they made good progress in science.

At the end of Key Stage 4, a high percentage of pupils get five or more higher GCSE grades and a very high percentage gain five or more graded results, reflecting the school's aim to be inclusive. Results are strong in several subject areas most notably in science and religious education. The school is aware that results in some subjects are lower and has put in place a series of measures to raise standards, with some success. The overall progress of pupils by the end of Key Stage 4 is satisfactory and is improving. Some large groups, particularly boys, progress less well than girls when compared with the national picture.

Standards and progress reached by the students in the sixth form are at least satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school judges personal development as good, however inspectors judge it to be outstanding. Pupils enjoy being at school and attendance is above average. They speak appreciatively about the quality of teaching they receive and the many additional activities that the school provides for them. They are enthusiastic in lessons and take an active part in their learning. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are courteous to adults and to one another, they proceed around the school between lessons and at the start and end of the day in a calm, orderly manner.

Pupils respond very well to assemblies and take part in balanced and mature discussions on moral issues. The school council provides an excellent example of pupils contributing towards improvement within school. Most notably, the council requested that form time should be more useful, particularly in terms of contributing to pupils' understanding of spiritual and cultural issues. They gain much useful guidance, particularly from their lessons in Life Skills. They appreciate that the school has improved both school meals and the tuck shop to encourage them to follow a healthy diet. There is good take-up of the wide range of extra-curricular physical education activities.

Most subjects contribute effectively to the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information communication technology. Pupils enjoy well organised work experience and receive good advice on options and careers. The school promotes very good race equality for all pupils. Monitoring of bullying and racist incidents reveals a low and declining level of occurrence. There is a consistent implementation of the equal opportunities policy and current issues are addressed thoroughly in the 'Life Skills' curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Students in the sixth form make a significant, positive contribution to the life of the whole school. They are involved in coaching and mentoring activities and provide valuable role models for younger pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning is good overall in Key Stage 3 and 4, and varies from satisfactory to outstanding. The school has introduced the 'Horsforth Lesson' which is based on the principles of effective teaching. This is seen in the most successful lessons where teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and a good understanding of course and examination requirements. There are lively and engaging activities and very good relationships are achieved by adherence to the school's effective, positive discipline. Pupils respond well and, by Year 11, many are mature, independent learners. Where teaching is less successful, there are some inconsistencies in the setting of specific lesson objectives and the checking of learning at the end of the lesson.

Recent improvements in how targets for pupils' progress are set and monitored are impacting significantly. These are known to the majority of pupils and encourage positive attitudes to learning. It is less effective when monitoring and quality of feedback from teachers lacks rigour.

The learning needs of all groups of pupils are well catered for. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress as teachers work well with teaching assistants to meet identified needs. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who are at an early stage of acquiring English are effectively included in lessons.

Sixth form teaching is satisfactory overall with a number of good features. A good climate for learning is established based on very good relationships and positive student attitudes. The best teaching is intellectually rigorous and challenging but in less successful lessons learning is not monitored effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the main school and the sixth form is good with a number of strengths reflecting the school's specialist science college status. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities enriches pupils' and students' experience. Access to information and communication technology is good and the development of e-learning is extending opportunity.

In Years 7 to 9, a broad and balanced curriculum, tailored well to meet the needs of different groups, has been strengthened by the introduction of Spanish as a second language and by providing drama for all. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are well met in a variety of ways, for example, by a new basic skills course for small groups in Year 8 and 9. Smaller class sizes facilitate a good level of individual support.

The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has evolved into four pathways meeting the needs and interests of different groups of pupils well. The work-related programme followed by one selected group is outstanding. Pupils appreciate its benefits and it leads successfully to employment or further education for most of them.

The sixth form curriculum is good. A broad range of academic subjects is offered, supplemented by a number of vocational courses. It provides good progression routes into further and higher education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for child protection are well established and the school has good arrangements for supporting vulnerable pupils. Arrangements for transition at Year 7 are very good, enabling pupils to settle quickly in to the life of school.

The school is an orderly and safe community in which pupils feel secure. Any isolated incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively and pupils are confident that they always have someone to turn to if they are troubled.

Guidance before choosing options or moving on at the end of Year 11 is good but there is less advice for those taking up employment after the sixth form.

The school takes care to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress in school. Pupils know their minimum target grades and the majority of teachers are quick to take appropriate supportive action when needed. The result is that almost all pupils, irrespective of any difficulties or disadvantages, are enabled to gain at least five GCSE passes at grades A*-G.

The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology to support pupils in their learning. The school's website provides pupils with ready access

so that they can get the information they need, particularly if they miss a lesson and need to catch up. Out of school, the e-learning centre provides opportunities for pupils to follow extra courses to gain useful additional qualifications.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, governors and senior leadership team provide a clear direction for the school. They set high expectations for all and these are communicated effectively to all staff and students who are extremely committed to the school and feel valued. The school gives high priority to raising achievement and equality of opportunity through a flexible curriculum and the commendable standards of care for all students. Parental responses to an inspection questionnaire are overwhelmingly positive.

The headteacher and senior leaders have good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have been effective in tackling identified weaknesses and good systems are in place to track and monitor pupils' progress. The majority of staff make good use of data, for example, in analysing test and exam results, including by gender and ethnicity. Self-evaluation is thorough but some departments are more effective than others in how they contribute to these processes. Managers and teachers share good practice in teaching and learning through a variety of well crafted strategies such as 'The Horsforth lesson'. A culmination of these strategies has led to improved achievements.

The governing body is committed to the school and provides outstanding support. They are highly effective in asking challenging questions and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Resources are effectively deployed and accommodation has been improved to now offer a safe and welcoming learning environment. Financial management is secure and the school offers good value for money. The school has good links with other providers and external agencies which further enhance the wide range of opportunities for its pupils.

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	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	2	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	2	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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
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	2	
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?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	2
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	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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 welcoming the Ofsted inspection team into your school last week. We appreciated the welcome you extended to us and the time many of you gave to talk with us and to let us know your views.

These are our main findings from the inspection:

Horsforth is a good school, in fact we found that some aspects of the school are outstanding. The school is well led, the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard in order to achieve their aim of 'Opportunity and Achievement for all.'

Your behaviour is extremely good. We noted this not only in your lessons but also as you went around the school between lessons and during break. You are polite, courteous and friendly toward one another and to adults in school.

Your teachers have developed a curriculum which is preparing you well for your future choices in life. Your teachers also care for you well, guiding you and supporting you as you make those important choices.

You told us that you are grateful for this help and that you know exactly what to do if there is a problem. You value the opportunities the school gives you towards leading a healthy lifestyle. Your attendance is good and you told us that you enjoy coming to school and appreciate the hard work of your teachers.

We asked your parents and carers for their views of your school. The overwhelming majority of them have great confidence in the work of the school in leading you to success.

Standards in your school are high but we think your school is well equipped to help you achieve even higher, particularly those of you who are in the sixth form. The staff and governors are going to be working extremely hard to achieve this.

They will need to monitor more closely what is happening in your lessons and how well you are progressing towards reaching your targets.

You may want to think about ways in which you could assist in this.

Once again, may we thank you all for your openness and support during this inspection. There is much for you and your teachers to be proud of at Horsforth School and we wish you every success for the future in all that you do.