



Quarrydale School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122840
LEA NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 285540
Inspection dates 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Pam Haezewindt LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Stoneyford Road
School category	Community		NG17 2DU
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01623 554178
Number on roll	944	Fax number	01623 517814
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.J A Heald
Date of previous inspection	12 February 2001	Headteacher	Mr. J C Weaver

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	285540

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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

Quarrydale School is an average size comprehensive school with a small sixth form. It serves a former coal mining community. Most students live within walking distance of the school. A very large majority of students are of White British origin. A very small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students enter the school with standards that are just below the national average but with low levels of literacy. The school has a larger than average number of students known to be eligible for free school meals and a lower than average number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school honestly judged that it may be inadequate given the results in last year's examinations at the end of Key Stage 4 and the results of earlier teaching observations. Inspectors found evidence to show that the school is now satisfactory and provides satisfactory value for money. This is due in large part, but not exclusively, to the improvements the school has made since January 2006. The school has improved progress and standards in Key Stage 3. This improvement has been sustained and there is evidence to show an improving trend in Key Stage 4. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is rapidly developing its use of assessment data to improve performance, although use by departments and individual members of staff to improve teaching and learning is inconsistent. Some students' literacy levels remain low and, although the school has some measures in place to develop these, there is insufficient focus on developing literacy in many lessons. Students' behaviour is generally good and attendance has improved although it remains below the national average. Students are beginning to develop healthy lifestyles. Curriculum provision is satisfactory and improving and students are soundly cared for, guided and supported. Students' social skills are not as well developed as they might be and there is room for improvement in spiritual and cultural development. Currently, form time is not well used. Whilst overall leadership and management are satisfactory, direction provided by the recently appointed headteacher is excellent and he is ably supported by senior leaders. The measures which are being put in place to develop rigorous monitoring of lessons, self-evaluation across the school and subsequent action are very good and have the potential to improve both leadership and management at all levels and student performance. The school has tackled the improvements required in the last inspection and has made other improvements such as the broadening of the curriculum in Key Stage 4. Leadership is now sharply focussed on improvement. The school has considerable capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's view that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. In this small sixth form students are well known by their tutors, whom they acknowledge are readily available to give them advice and guidance. Students have confidence in the quality of education provided. They enjoy their courses and although examination results are low in comparison with national averages they make satisfactory progress given their starting points. Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. The large majority complete their courses and some demonstrate a willingness to take responsibility, such as helping younger students with their work. However, not enough use is made of the potential of these students to act as positive role models for younger students and so make a bigger contribution to the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Strengths in lessons are the quality of relationships and willingness of students' to learn. However, in many lessons students are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their

own learning. The good range of advanced level and AS level courses is balanced by a currently limited range of vocational options. The school is working with partners to tackle this issue and provide for a wider range of students' interests. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Recent initiatives to bring about improvement, such as the restructured management team and the introduction of reliable systems for setting students' targets and monitoring their progress, have yet to make an impact. The sixth form successfully provides for a number of students who would not be in full-time education and adds to the ethos of the school. As such it provides adequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by taking account of assessment information in the planning of lessons so that they are closely matched to all students' needs. - Embed rigorous monitoring, evaluation and subsequent action to bring about improvement at all levels in the school. - Improve standards and the rate of progress through a consistent focus on literacy in all subjects across the curriculum. - Make more effective use of form time, for example by using it to develop students' social skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of all students is satisfactory as is that of the very few students whose first language is not English. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Attainment on entry to the school is below average overall. Over the last three years, the results in the national tests taken at the end of Year 9, show a rising trend. In 2005 the results in English, mathematics and science rose significantly to exceed the school's targets and be close to average. Results in English were above average. General Certificate of Education (GCSE) results have been generally static over recent years and exceptionally low in comparison with the national average. In 2005, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades fell and while the achievement of girls was broadly average, that of boys was below. Although students achieved well in French and statistics, they achieved less well in all other subjects. The school is beginning to use assessment information more effectively for setting targets and monitoring students' progress and this has begun to have a positive impact, as seen in the rise in standards at the end of Year 9. However, this positive impact has yet to be seen at the end of Year 11 and the GCSE targets set for 2005 proved to be overambitious. Careful monitoring by senior leaders shows that the targets set for the present Year 11 may also be difficult to achieve. However, more realistic but nevertheless challenging targets have been set for the present Year 10 and inspection evidence shows that the progress made by these students in Year 9 has been sustained and that the school is on track to achieve these targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Although a minority of students do not attend regularly, recent systems to improve attendance and support those with a range of difficulties are bringing about significant improvements. Most students behave well. Recent swift and effective action to eradicate some unacceptable behaviour and bullying initially caused a rise in exclusions but these have now been greatly reduced. The school creates a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere which most students enjoy and in which they feel safe. Students treat each other with respect and appreciate the respect which almost all teachers give them. By supporting a number of local and national charities they show concern for others. Overall, social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Social development is well supported by a range of trips and visits, some of which are residential. However, some students lack confidence in expressing themselves. Spiritual development has improved since the previous inspection, but opportunities for development and for preparing for life in a multicultural society are still too few. Work related learning, work experience and contact with local businesses help students plan constructively for their future employment but, for some students, low level literacy skills remain a barrier. By undertaking responsibilities such as peer counsellors and members of the school council students learn the importance of contributing to the community around them. The school council is becoming increasingly effective in representing students' opinions and enhancing the school's reputation within the community. Students understand the need to live healthy lifestyles and recent changes to the school canteen menu have provided healthier choices of meals, although older students, particularly those who obtain food off site still eat quantities of less healthy food. Significant numbers take part in sports and musical activities, but participation in other school activities is low.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and enables students to learn and make progress. Management is right to make the improvement of teaching a high priority to improve progress further. The inspection team concurs with the senior leadership team's most recent judgements describing a picture of improved teaching and learning in lessons. There are many well taught lessons in which teachers know their subjects well, and adapt work to meet students' needs. Methods maintain interest and learning is extended by helpful homework. Relationships are usually very positive, teachers manage students well and students have confidence in their teachers. An outstanding Year 8 lesson on high jumping enabled students to understand the theory involved with carefully managed practical activity to give students the understanding and confidence to make very good progress. In less successful lessons, the planning of work is not well enough informed by assessment information to identify students' learning needs. Teachers

confuse learning objectives or outcomes with a list of the work to be done, so students do not know what learning is intended. Work is not adapted well enough to meet all students' needs. Teachers talk for too long and students have little scope to take the lead in learning for themselves. Literacy is not consistently made a high enough priority. The teaching of students with additional learning needs is satisfactory. Teaching assistants have recently been attached to subject departments, and their work is better focused on students' learning needs. Students with additional learning needs make progress in line with others in mainstream classes. Most teachers mark students' work regularly. The best marking is very detailed, opens a dialogue with students, and constructively helps them to understand what they could have done better. However, some marking gives minimal advice and little indication of the standard the pupil has reached.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Students with additional learning needs have a good and expanding range of opportunities. In Key Stage 3, students are taught all National Curriculum subjects and improvement in literacy skills is receiving strong emphasis in a Year 7 'literacy hour' each week. However, the enhancing of literacy skills is less well developed across the curriculum. In Key Stage 4, students have a satisfactory and improving range of choice to meet their needs and interests. Planning is in place to secure continuity of learning to age 19. Vocational courses in school and in neighbouring colleges extend opportunities well. Good links with business enable students to develop their understanding of working life well, and there are good opportunities for students to learn practical skills in the workplace. Sixth form opportunities are satisfactory and provide for the full range of ability. Planning is taking place to expand the curriculum from next September in partnership with other schools and colleges. However, students do not receive their entitlement to religious education. An informative personal, social and health education course runs through the school. Students' learning is enriched by a sound range of extra-curricular opportunities, especially in drama, music and sport. Students with particular talents are given an interesting programme of additional learning opportunities. Timetabled time with tutors in the mornings is not used effectively enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's provision for students' care, guidance and support is satisfactory. An effective induction system ensures that students settle quickly in Year 7. A detailed and increasingly effective system of monitoring progress against targets is beginning to raise levels of attainment for students of all abilities. Students' 'progress days' help them and their parents and carers to know what they need to do to improve. Parents and carers receive regular reports but the quality of these is inconsistent across subjects. In Years 9 and 11 students benefit from carefully devised systems whereby they are guided to appropriate choices of subjects for GCSE and courses for their education

post-16. Provision for students with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities is good. They benefit from detailed, personalised learning plans and, in lessons, from the support of teaching assistants. However, teachers' planning does not always make fully effective use of these resources. Similarly, within lessons there is not always a high enough challenge for gifted and talented students, although outside lessons, provision for these students is good. All health and safety procedures, including those for off-site visits and for work experience placements, are carefully observed. Staff are properly informed about child protection procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher is setting excellent direction for the school which has moved forward apace in recent months. He is now ably supported by senior managers and there is a common sense of purpose among staff. The recent self evaluation exercise identifying of what needs to be done to improve the school is impressive and has been done in consultation with all stakeholders. The quality varies in leadership and management further down the school. The use of data has had an impact on improving standards in Key Stage 3 and this can now be seen in Key Stage 4. Some departments have good tracking processes in place which could provide good models for others to ensure all students make good progress. The systems the school has developed for improving attendance are good, resulting in improved attendance over this academic year. Teaching and learning have not been well enough monitored until recently and whole school initiatives to improve teaching have been piecemeal. However, the headteacher has now observed almost all staff, rigorous support has been given where necessary and improvements made. All leaders have now been trained by the Local Authority in quality assurance techniques, and the school is identifying where there are needs for particular improvements in departments. The school is now ready to embed more rigorous monitoring and evaluation. The restructuring of the staffing roles and responsibilities will support this. Performance management is in place and linked to pupil outcomes and professional development. However, the rigour of the process varies and senior staff are aware that this needs some improvement. Governors support the school soundly and provide a good level of challenge. The school is aware of the barriers it has to learning and takes good steps to eliminate these. Students' individual needs in lessons still need to be better accommodated and relatively high levels of staff absence reduced. The school is now taking good account of stakeholders' views and there are good links with outside agencies to promote students' learning. The head has inherited a rather large deficit budget which, in conjunction with the local authority, he is dealing with appropriately. The school provides satisfactory value for money. There is now good capacity for improvement.

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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?	2	2
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	4	4
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	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	3

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	3

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	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

On behalf of the inspectors and myself who visited your school on 17 and 18 May 2006 I should like to thank you for your warm welcome to Quarrydale School, helping us with directions around the school and talking to us so willingly. We are pleased to tell you that Quarrydale School provides you with a satisfactory education. These are some of the things we found out about your school. - It is a caring school and staff want to do their best for you. - You are doing well in Key Stage 3 and your progress in Key Stage 4 is improving. - Most of you enjoy coming to school and are proud of it. However, a few of you do not attend as often as you should and the progress you make is restricted accordingly. - Most of you behave well in lessons and around the school and respect each other and staff. - Sixth formers enjoy their courses and they appreciate the help they are given by staff. - Your curriculum has improved recently and is expanding to provide you with more choice of subjects. - Your new headteacher is leading the school very well. He is highly committed to your achievements and has high expectations of you. We are sure you will live up to these. We have asked the school to make sure that the needs of all of you are taken into account in lessons. Sometimes different students need some different help with work. We have also asked that all subjects help with developing your literacy skills to improve your overall progress in school and that your form time is used more productively, for example, to develop social skills. Thank you again for your welcome. We enjoyed visiting Quarrydale School very much.