



# Wales High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106961  
**Local Authority** Rotherham  
**Inspection number** 287665  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jan Bennett HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Storth Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Kiveton Park, Sheffield
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18		South Yorkshire S26 5QQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01909 771291
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1542	<b>Fax number</b>	01909 772849
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	317		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Beeston
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr L Morton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–18	18–19 October 2006	287665

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Wales High School is a large mixed comprehensive school. The school is in a former coal mining area which has been prioritised for regeneration funding. The average family income in the area is considerably lower than the national average. The vast majority of students are White British; a small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school caters for a large number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students' prior attainment on entry to the school is improving and is higher than average in Years 7 and 8. The school has specialist business and enterprise status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

Wales High School is an outstanding school with an inspirational headteacher. The school has done a remarkable job in encouraging young people to work hard and to stay in education beyond the age of 16. Over 90% of students stay on in the sixth form or go into training and/or further education. Standards are good. Students at Wales High School enjoy their learning and make outstanding progress.

Managers, teachers and support staff work exceptionally hard to make their school 'the best'. A strong desire to improve is evident in all parts of the school. Governors and parents are very supportive of the school. The headteacher and his senior managers know the school well. They are aware of the few areas of comparative weakness and are well on their way to addressing them. One is to improve achievement in the sixth form by strengthening the monitoring and support system.

The curriculum is outstanding and the students take full advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer. Teaching is good and outstanding in some areas. The school draws on its specialist business and enterprise status well; enterprise features in all areas of the curriculum and the school plays a leading role in developing business and enterprise education in the area and on behalf of other schools.

Above all, this is a school that cares very well for its staff and students. The headteacher and his senior management team are very supportive of staff and, in return, the staff work exceptionally hard and are very loyal to the school. The standard of care, guidance and support given to the students is exceptionally high and they respond by behaving well and showing respect for each other. The school welcomes students with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and enables them to achieve very successfully. It offers a 'last chance' to some of the area's most challenging students and has a very good record of success in helping them to get the most out of school.

Leadership and management are outstanding; the school provides excellent value for money.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Sixth form provision is good. The sixth form has an open access policy and accepts students with lower than average entry requirements. The curriculum is outstanding with a wide range of courses available to suit different needs. Students receive good guidance about choices and careers. Teaching and learning are good overall and students make good progress as a result. The school recognises that there is variation in the quality of teaching across subjects and has strengthened the teaching teams in the weaker areas. Monitoring and tracking systems have been strengthened to identify signs of students' underachieving but insufficient attention is given to monitoring potentially vulnerable students at the very start of their course. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding with particular strengths in their

contribution to the community and development of skills for the world of work. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. A number of improvements have been introduced which have been welcomed by the students. They include strengthening of the support system and extra tuition time in the lower sixth.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Share best practice so that all teaching is at least good.
- Improve achievement in the sixth form.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

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

Students make outstanding progress at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The progress that they make in mathematics is especially good and places the school in the top 7% of schools nationally. No group of students underperforms, including students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Standards are good and improving. In 2005, the proportion of students passing at least 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C was 58% which was just above average. Unvalidated data show that this proportion rose to 67% in 2006. The proportion of students obtaining at least 5 GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including mathematics and English, has also gone up appreciably in 2006. Girls perform slightly better than boys at GCSE but the gap between them is much narrower than average.

Around 70% of Year 11 students progress into the sixth form. Pass rates at AS level are high but standards in the sixth form overall are broadly average. This is good given that the entry requirements for courses are low. Girls get much better grades than boys at AS level but the boys almost close the gap by the end of the A2 course.

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

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding and make a strong contribution to their academic achievement. Very clear expectations give pupils the security to behave really well. Attendance is good and attitudes to learning in lessons are outstanding. Students of all abilities are enthusiastic and collaborate particularly well. They clearly enjoy their learning - a product of the wide range of stimulating opportunities and good, well established relationships with the very stable staff.

Students benefit from exceptional guidance on personal health and safety, and develop a thorough understanding of both issues. They are very well prepared for success in later life by the strong emphasis on basic skills and information and communication technology alongside extensive opportunities for collaboration and enterprise.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The consideration and respect that students show for others are exemplified in the wide range of ways they support each other, and those who are worse off both locally and in many other parts of the world. Students develop excellent cultural and spiritual awareness through the international dimension in the curriculum and the quality of discussion in the well established tutor groups.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good in almost all respects with some areas of outstanding practice. However, in a small number of lessons scattered across the different year groups and subjects, the quality of teaching and learning is only satisfactory. Students are appreciative of the enthusiasm of many of their teachers, who set them challenging tasks. Relationships in the classroom are excellent. Attitudes to learning are highly positive and this makes an important contribution to students' high levels of achievement. Systems of tracking students' progress are used well by teachers to identify possible underachievement and to enable them to set specific learning targets for students. Most teachers are beginning to use appropriate methods of assessment in the classroom that help students to become more aware of their progress and of how to improve. Effective support is provided by teaching assistants, the school's advisory teachers or the provision of extra classes so that all students, including the gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve very well. The school acknowledges that some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching need to be ironed out so that the features of the best teaching can be put into practice more widely.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding throughout the school. There are high levels of enrichment, reflected in the numerous awards gained by the school. Students are strongly encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle. Across the age range, students are given many opportunities to develop enterprise skills, such as organising their own fund-raising ventures to support good causes. There are very strong links with schools in a range of countries, which have a significant impact on the curriculum. In addition, there are very many extra-curricular activities that are extremely popular and well supported.

All students are well catered for and extra activities are provided for the most able students. In Years 10 and 11 there are separate sciences at GCSE and the fast-tracking

of some subjects. There is a very strong emphasis on work-related learning and a good range of vocational subjects to supplement the curriculum.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support available to students is exceptional, and underpins the learning ethos right across the school. Staff know the students very well: they can anticipate students' needs and ensure that they are met. Tutors, heads of year, pastoral support assistants and mentors work very closely together to ensure that students are extremely well supported. Students know where to turn for help with any academic or personal problems and they speak very highly of the quality and availability of support.

The support for students with additional needs is extensive and innovative. A highly skilled team provides flexible support that is well matched to the changing needs of individual students. The very stable tutor system enables students to develop excellent working relationships with adults and with each other. All Year 7 students take part in a residential programme in the first half term which they described as 'an excellent bonding opportunity'. The staff's rigorous attention to all aspects of students' safety, an extremely generous provision of support for learning outside lessons and a culture where students expect to support each other complete this highly supportive mesh of care.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is a school which knows its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further. The well established culture of self-review and continuous improvement is built upon a collaborative approach to developing and valuing each person's expertise. Managers routinely monitor the quality of provision and provide constructive and supportive feedback which encourages staff to reflect on and improve their practice. The school improvement plan is an effective tool for action planning.

Financial management is very strong and the school provides excellent value for money. Managers have clear responsibilities and accountabilities. The staff are a cohesive team and morale is very high because staff respect the integrity of the decision-making process and appreciate the support given by senior managers and governors. Managers make good use of data to plan changes and improve provision. Underachievement is tackled where it surfaces. In the past, the analysis of performance data and the action taken to tackle issues has been less effective in the sixth form. However, data analysis has been more thorough this year and robust action is being taken to address underperformance. Initiatives and innovation are implemented well, although the

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evaluation of their impact on students is not routinely programmed into the otherwise exemplary change process. There are rigorous processes in place to ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

The governors know the school well. They expect the best for each student. They take their responsibilities seriously and are far from complacent. As the chair said, 'We are never satisfied.' Governors rightly give high priority to the recruitment and retention of staff, and in particular to continuing professional development. Parents too are very supportive of the school and are very pleased with how well their children progress. The school has made excellent progress since the last inspection and has an outstanding capacity to improve.





## 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>	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
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	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below 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	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of the school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Wales High School is an outstanding school.

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

- You work very well in lessons and make excellent progress overall but we are recommending that attention should be given to improving success rates in the sixth form.
- Your behaviour is very good and you show consideration and respect for others. We were very impressed by the way in which you support each other and help less fortunate young people in other parts of the world.
- Teaching is good and it is outstanding in some lessons. We are recommending that the school works hard to improve all teaching to bring it up to the standard of the best.
- The range of courses and the number of out-of-school activities on offer are outstanding.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are of the highest quality and the tutorial system is a strong feature of the school.
- Mr Morton and his team of managers are doing an excellent job and they know exactly what needs to be done to make the school even better.

We would like to thank you for contributing to the inspection and for being so polite and helpful. We would also like to congratulate you on being part of such an outstanding school and wish you well for the future.