



Rastrick High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107576
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 287859
Inspection date 13 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christine Harrison

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Field Top Road
School category	Foundation		Rastrick, Brighouse
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire HD6 3XB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 710235
Number on roll (school)	1408	Fax number	01484 720043
Number on roll (6th form)	217		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs J Wilby
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Lennie
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	13 November 2006	287859

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large comprehensive school serves Rastrick, Elland, Brighouse and parts of the neighbouring borough of Kirklees. The majority of students are White British. The proportion of minority ethnic students is above average; these students come from several different groups, the largest being of Pakistani heritage. The number of students for whom English is not their first language is low and there are very few students who are at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is average. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds but, overall, their socio-economic circumstances are average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but the number with statements of special educational need is above average. The school has resourced provision for students with physical disabilities. It has Specialist Technology College status and holds Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and Investors in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and both students and parents appreciate the quality of education and care that it provides. Students make good progress during their time in school, both in their learning and their personal development. Students arrive in Year 7 with broadly average standards; they make good progress through the school so that GCSE results are usually better than might be expected and students achieve well. GCSE results in 2005 were average in some respects and above average in others. However, results in 2006 indicate a significant improvement, notably in the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A* to C. This improvement is the result of precise monitoring and increased mentoring support provided by the school. Students do particularly well in science, mathematics and design technology, reflecting the impact of the school's technology college status. Standards in the sixth form are average, but represent good achievement by these students.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Students of all ages report that almost all their subjects are well taught. Very good relationships between teachers and students underpin the work in most lessons. As a younger student said: 'Teachers always seem to find time for you'. Students know what is expected of them in terms of how they should behave and what they need to learn. Teachers' planning for lessons is generally successful in meeting the needs of students. However, in Years 7 to 9, lessons are sometimes slightly slow and not as demanding as they might be; this is particularly significant for higher attainers who could learn more quickly.

Students report that they very much enjoy school. Their attendance is excellent and they behave well both in lessons and around the school. Students' personal development is good overall. Their attitudes to learning are satisfactory in Year 7, but improve quickly as they progress through the school. This is partly a result of the support and guidance they receive, but also the influence of the positive, friendly and supportive ethos that pervades the school. Most students take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the school and develop mature and responsible attitudes that are important for the next stage of education and future employment. They are very well informed about how to stay safe and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They work hard for various charities and value the school council and the opportunities it provides to influence what happens in school.

The school's care and support for students is exemplary. This is particularly apparent in its dealings with vulnerable students and the few students who do not find it easy to conform to the school's high expectations of behaviour. The school has very good strategies for dealing with these students; most of them respond well and make at least satisfactory progress. The learning support centre gives outstanding support to those who need to get 'back on track', either with their learning or their attitudes to school. The school provides excellent guidance to support students' learning. Students know their target grades or levels and how well they are doing in relation to those targets. Teachers are quick to pick up any underachievement and provide additional support.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, governors and senior team share a determination to provide the best possible education for students. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report have been overcome and GCSE results have improved. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and there is a clear understanding of what is needed to raise standards further. Hence, there is good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money, particularly in relation to the successful unit for students with physical disabilities, for which there is only a limited budget.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students achieve well in the sixth form. They enter Year 12 with standards that are slightly below average for students starting sixth form courses. They make good progress through Years 12 and 13 and reach standards that are broadly average. Teaching and learning are good and students are well supported with regular monitoring to ensure that they are on course to meet their targets. Sixth form students make a good contribution to the main school, notably in their mentoring role with younger students. Although there is a good range of A level and AS level subjects, the range of courses for lower attainers is limited and the school is aware of the need for greater choice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the pace and challenge in lessons in Years 7 to 9, particularly for higher attainers.
- Increase the range of subject choices in Years 12 and 13 so that lower attainers have better opportunities to achieve appropriate qualifications.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards are above average and students achieve well in school. Students make good progress in Years 7 to 11 and, by the time they reach Year 11, standards are generally above average. GCSE results dipped in 2005 and were, in most respects, average. Nevertheless, almost all students gained at least five grades A* to G, a situation which was better than the national picture. The 2006 results show a significant improvement, and indicate a return to the results of 2003 and 2004 which were above average.

Students make good progress in lessons and in their written work. This is largely the result of the good teaching they receive, but also because of their own good attitudes to learning. Within this overall picture of good progress, however, there is some variation. In lessons in Years 7 to 9, activities are often planned to meet the needs of middle attainers. Lower attainers and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally receive extra support so that they learn effectively. However, the

activities are often rather slow or undemanding for the more able and they could make more progress than they do.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school is particularly successful in raising self-esteem and aspirations; this was reflected in one student's comment: 'This school shows you that you can achieve what you want to'. Most students are well motivated, clearly enjoy school and participate eagerly in the opportunities offered to them. They take pride in their work and show respect for each other and their teachers. They develop a good range of skills which contribute to their prospects for future employment. A small minority of students do not always behave as well as others and there are isolated incidents of poor behaviour. The school deals with these incidents most effectively and they are not allowed to disrupt other students' learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and plan lessons carefully. They generally ask searching questions to ensure that students understand what is being taught. Students value the extra advice and support that teachers provide outside lessons. Although most lessons are good, there are some where learning is satisfactory. In these lessons, teaching provides appropriate information and explanations but is not stimulating. As a result, students remain well behaved, but are not fully involved and do not learn as efficiently as they might. Teachers' marking of students' work is generally good and most teachers give useful indications to students of how the work could be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good and enables students to achieve well. Its breadth reflects the school's status as a technology college. The range of academic subjects and vocational programmes is good and meets students' needs and interests. A small minority of students have only limited time for information and communication technology (ICT) in Year 11, but this has been corrected for future years. Students appreciate the quality and relevance of the well planned personal, social and health education programme.

The school offers an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities including sports, drama, music and opportunities for extra revision. Participation rates are high and the activities make a substantial contribution to students' progress and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, support and guidance are outstanding. The pastoral system is extremely well organised and draws upon a wide range of expertise, including outside agencies, to ensure students get the support they need. Child protection procedures are in place and health and safety checks are robust. Transition arrangements at all stages are well thought out and effective, and parents appreciate how well students settle into Year 7. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all the school offers; they receive good support from teachers, learning support assistants and from their fellow students.

The Learning Centre provides excellent support and uses interesting practical activities very effectively to assist those students who need extra help with their learning, outside normal lessons, and those who are in danger of 'dropping out' of school. Systems to modify students' behaviour are helping to reduce the number of fixed term exclusions. The school takes students who are excluded from other schools and is largely successful in motivating them to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership team is in a state of transition with several temporary appointments. Nevertheless, the school runs smoothly and the focus on improvement is maintained. The monitoring of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, but there is scope for further development. Some lesson observations tend to concentrate more on what the teacher does rather than on how well pupils learn. The school's specialist status is having a positive influence on the work of the school. For example, the design and technology department has piloted an excellent system for using assessment data more effectively and that is now being implemented across the school. Governors bring valuable expertise to the school, for example, in aspects of health and safety. The arrangements where 'duty governors' investigate particular aspects of school life improve governors' understanding of the school and make a useful contribution to the school's self-assessment.

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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?	2	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	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
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	2	
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	2
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?	1	1

¹ 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

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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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 very much for making my colleague and myself so welcome when we visited your school today. As you know, the purpose of the visit was to check on how well the school is doing. We are particularly grateful to those of you who told us about your experiences in school. The information and opinions you provided were very important to us in making our judgements.

We agree with you that this is a good school. The quality of teaching is good so that you learn quickly and do well in tests and examinations. You told us that you enjoyed school because everybody was friendly. We were certainly impressed by the atmosphere in school and the very good relationships between students and teachers. We judged a major strength of the school to be the outstanding care, support and guidance that the school provides for you and the way in which it tries to meet your individual needs.

Nevertheless, there are a few aspects of the school that could be improved. In particular, we are asking teachers to make the work slightly more difficult in Years 7 to 9 and to encourage you to learn even faster. We hope that you will play your part and rise to the extra challenge. In the sixth form, there is only a narrow range of choices for those of you who don't want to do A level subjects and the school agrees that many of you would have better chances to gain good qualifications if there was a wider choice.

We enjoyed meeting you and wish you every success in the future.