



Knottingley High School and Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108283
Local Authority Wakefield
Inspection number 288064
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector Elisabeth Linley HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Middle Lane
School category	Community		Knottingley
Age range of pupils	11–16		West Yorkshire WF11 0BZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01977 622850
Number on roll (school)	867	Fax number	01977 622892
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Graham Clark
		Headteacher	Mr A Hutchinson
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	13–14 February 2007	288064

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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

This comprehensive school serves the town of Knottingley and the large majority of students who attend are of White British heritage. The community is varied with pockets of significant deprivation and the students at the school reflect this diversity. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is just over 21%, which is above the national average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, unlike those with statements of special educational need which is below average.

Knottingley High School has become a Specialist Sports College since its last inspection. It has also gained the Sports Mark Gold Award, the Football Association Charter Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People status. Knottingley is also the host school for the local school sport coordinator partnership.

In recent weeks the school building has suffered significant storm damage. As a result, part of the school is temporarily closed whilst repair work is being completed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Knottingley High School and Sports College is a school that knows itself well. Inspectors agree with the judgement that the school provides a satisfactory quality of education with some good features. Much work has been done to address successfully the key issues raised at the time of the last inspection. In addition, the sports specialist status has added another dimension to the school's work. Community provision is a significant part of the school's specialist status and this aspect is well led and managed. Links with primary schools have been greatly strengthened and the specialism plays an important role in supporting students' health and well-being. Participation rates in sport are high. Teaching and learning within this area are good and other departments have similar strengths. However, this good practice is not systematically shared throughout the school, and in this respect the specialist status makes too little impact. Too great a proportion of teaching in school is satisfactory, rather than good or outstanding. It is this that is holding back students' progress in lessons, leading to insufficient impact on standards. There is much good guidance and support for learning in school. However, in lessons there is insufficient planning to meet the needs of individual students.

Standards overall are below average. However, a steady trend of improvement is being seen in the results of tests and examinations, and students' achievement, including those with LDD, is satisfactory. An exception to this is in English at Key Stage 3 where much work is required for students to meet the governors' challenging targets for 2007. Greater improvements are required in teaching and learning if standards are to be raised at a faster pace, and this requirement reflects the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides a caring and strong lead for the school's development. Other leaders are in the early stages of their role. Governors are effective in their work and together with the school, provide good financial management. The headteacher, staff and governors are rightly proud of the care and support that their students receive which is of a good quality. They promote good partnerships to enhance this support and the curriculum. Students appreciate the varied and effective curriculum that is available. This is reflected in their improved attendance, which nevertheless remains slightly below the national average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards overall, particularly in English at Key Stage 3.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students come into Year 7 with standards that are below average. Although they remain below average in English, mathematics and science throughout the school, a steady trend of improvement is now evident. Results in the 2005 Key Stage 3 tests for Year 9 were below average. In 2006, results improved in mathematics and science and students met challenging targets, reflecting satisfactory achievement. However, results in English declined and the targets set were not met. GCSE results have risen steadily in recent years but remain below average. Underperformance in statistics has been tackled successfully and progress has been made in reducing underachievement in science. Good standards in physical education have also been maintained. In 2006, the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE grades increased. However, the proportion achieving five good grades including English and mathematics declined slightly. Nonetheless, given the starting points of the students who took the examinations, their achievement was satisfactory.

The school analyses data very thoroughly and so identified the key issue of underperformance, particularly by lower attaining students. Concerted action has been taken to tackle this issue and the school has adopted more challenging targets for all students. These measures are having a clear impact. However, this is not consistent across all departments and reflects the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning and progress made by students in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The majority of students say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their improved attendance. Attendance rates are gradually rising as a result of the school's work to promote regular and punctual attendance. However, attendance is below average and punctuality remains an issue for some students in Key Stage 4. The attitudes of learners are generally positive and exclusions for incidents of poor behaviour have reduced. Where teaching is good, behaviour has improved and students participate well in lessons, taking part in all activities responsibly. Some students and parents report that bullying is a concern. However, the large majority of students and parents say that where bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. Most students report that they feel safe in school and most parents agree. Healthy lifestyles are well understood by students. Some are involved in organising and supporting activities dealing with personal health and well-being as a part of the school's citizenship programme: this initiative is valued by their peers. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Strengths include the students' contribution to the wider community through sporting, music and drama events. Students are proud of the fact that there is very little litter around school and of the new toilets, which are so clean that they have won a national award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All teachers work hard to promote good relationships with students and this supports positive behaviour in lessons. However, the focus given to meet the different needs of students in the planning of lessons is not consistent across departments. As a result, students do not regularly make the good progress needed to impact sufficiently on their achievement. Where teaching is good staff are confident to try different strategies to engage learners of all abilities. For example, practical activities and effective, probing questioning by teachers promotes students' thinking and aids their learning well. In a good drama lesson the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject was infectious. Students evaluated the success of the teacher's performance and, as examiners, discussed what grades the performance should be awarded. Such strategies are discussed when teachers meet informally to share good practice. However, not enough is done to formally share good practice in a systematic way across subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum which meets the needs and interests of students well. It is enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular sports, creative and artistic activities, and subject booster classes that involve most students in the school. In Key Stage 3, particular flexibility with focused groups in Year 7 helps develop the literacy skills for students in most need. Such provision enables them to progress and to raise their self-esteem. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum is broad and inclusive: any pupil can choose to take one or more vocational subjects in addition to the normal range of academic subjects. Close partnerships with local employers are being extended to provide even greater flexibility for work-related learning. Effective alternative provision is also made for students who have difficulty coping with the normal curriculum. For the identified gifted and talented students there is appropriate extension work designed for them, for example, through the 'Aim Higher' project. Other quality initiatives include the participation of all students in Year 11 taking part in the 'HE4all' drama to inspire and to raise aspiration. Such examples, which are still evolving, have yet to demonstrate their full impact on achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students receive good quality care and support during their time in school. They talk positively of the benefits of attending the learning support unit, regardless of need or ability: it is a place where they feel valued and able to work well. The academic guidance they receive is good, although it has yet to impact fully on achievement. Students are assessed in each subject regularly throughout the year and given targets with specific guidance on how to improve their performance. Students are well aware

of their targets and most know what they have to do next to achieve them. Any students at risk of underachievement, including those who join school who are new to English, are promptly identified and receive additional support: booster classes and extra sessions are available. Vocational guidance is good for option choices, careers and work experience. Older students are trained to become peer mentors to provide help and support alongside external agencies for a wide variety of needs, particularly health and personal issues. Child protection arrangements are securely in place and are regularly monitored to ensure they comply with all legislation. Vulnerable students are also continually tracked to ensure that their needs are identified and met.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher's philosophy to empower others is fundamental to his strong leadership of the school: members of his senior leadership team have responded well. An example of how this has secured improvement is through the tracking of students' progress. The school's collation of data is rigorous and key staff analyse it effectively. The monitoring of teaching and learning is also thorough. Although improvements in monitoring are substantial, the evaluation of information gathered is yet to make a significant difference to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Middle leaders are keen to be effective and although some in key roles are in the early stages of their development they are beginning to make a difference. This is reflected particularly in mathematics and science, where standards are showing signs of improvement. Elsewhere, the full impact of development work is yet to be seen, for example, in improving standards in English at Key Stage 3, and ensuring that good practice from the sports college is shared to improve teaching and learning across the school.

The governing body, new since September 2006, is fortunate to have key members who bring expertise to their role. Governors are well informed by the headteacher about the school's work and, as a result, know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As a critical friend the governing body is effective overall. An example of this is in their working with school to secure its good financial management: the significant budget deficit noted at the time of the last inspection has now been reversed.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	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	2
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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 welcoming us when we visited your school. Even though your school has been severely damaged in the recent storms you are managing well with the disruption.

We appreciated having the opportunity to talk to you in lessons and to meet a number of groups of students. Most of you were clear that you enjoy school and appreciate the good quality of opportunities that the curriculum provides. Your attendance overall is getting better, although it is still not up to the average of most comprehensive schools. The Sports College Status has brought much benefit to the school and your links with the community through this are good. There are also a significant number of extra activities in sport, music and drama available which you value and are keen to attend. The care, guidance and support you receive are of good quality. A particular feature of this is the learning support unit which you say meets your needs no matter what they are.

Teaching and learning in school are satisfactory. There is some good practice in the different departments but at the moment it isn't shared throughout school well enough. You obviously like lessons that are active and often practical. We hope that teachers will develop different ways to make sure they are meeting your needs.

Your progress is beginning to pick up and examination and test results are steadily getting better, although standards are still below average in English, mathematics and science. In English at Key Stage 3 in particular you are not doing well enough. So there are a number of things that I want you to work on with the staff to help improve your school. These are:

- to make sure that the quality of teaching and learning improves
- to build on the progress you make in lessons so that you achieve well and standards are raised throughout school, particularly in English at Key Stage 3.