



Woldgate College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118081
Local Authority East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 291015
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mark Williams HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	92 Kilnwick Road
School category	Community		Pocklington, York
Age range of pupils	11–18		East Yorkshire, YO42 2LL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01759 302395
Number on roll (school)	1381	Fax number	01759 306535
Number on roll (6th form)	241		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms E Forth
		Headteacher	Mr J Bower
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	1–2 November 2006	291015

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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

This larger than average secondary school serves a small market town and a wide rural area. It became a Specialist Arts College in September 2004.

The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is one quarter of the national average. Nearly all students are of White British heritage and have English as their first language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average, although the percentage with statements of special educational need is half that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

At the heart of this good and improving college lies outstanding care, guidance and support for students, shared belief in creativity across the curriculum by all staff and leadership which is determined and innovative. As a result, students make good progress in their learning, personal development and well-being. The college provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

Students make good progress in their learning so that results at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are above national averages. The college records students' progress well and puts into place a variety of learning opportunities to assist those who are struggling or need further challenge. The personal development and well-being of students are good. They really enjoy what the college offers them and this is reflected in their very good attendance and their active participation in lessons. Students display mature attitudes in their learning, behave well and are proud to be a part of the college community.

Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good. Teachers adopt a variety of lively and interesting teaching styles that meet the needs of the students well. Both boys and girls participate fully in lessons, many enjoying creative subjects such as dance, part of the school's specialism. This good teaching is enhanced by good quality support from teaching assistants, the effective use of instructors and cover arrangements, and a curriculum which is well matched to students' needs.

At the very heart of the college's work are the outstanding care, guidance and support given to students. All students clearly matter and staff are dedicated in providing the best possible opportunities for them to develop and be safeguarded well, often going that extra mile.

The developing leadership and management team is good and focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of all students through opportunities for increased creativity. The headteacher has boldly devolved leadership throughout the college, allowing the good range of talents within the college's staff to come to the fore. His leadership is outstanding. So too is governance. The leadership of the college's specialism is also outstanding and has allowed teachers and learners to embrace creativity in teaching and learning with open arms. It has had a highly positive impact in the community, not least in promoting dance. Despite this, the college acknowledges it has not always articulated clearly to parents its good plans and successes in this and other areas.

The college has made good progress since the previous inspection. This, coupled with the good progress of students and the growing impact of the college's specialism, demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

This inclusive sixth form is growing and developing and provides a satisfactory education for its students. It has a number of strong features and provides satisfactory value for money.

Students reach standards at A level in line with the national average. Results in 2006 maintain the positive trend since the last inspection. Most students achieve well, successfully complete their courses and are able to further access their higher education and career ambitions. However, results at AS level are disappointing and, given their starting points, students in Year 12 make less initial progress than expected. The college acknowledges the need to ensure greater consistency in teaching and learning at this stage in the sixth form. The curriculum is good as are the care, guidance and support given. The leadership of the sixth form is satisfactory. The recently appointed head of sixth form is establishing a clear vision for its future development and has already put improvement plans into place. The capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure measures introduced to raise standards and develop creativity are evaluated and articulated, and that good practice continues to be embedded.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the sixth form so that it is consistently good.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement and standards are good in Years 7 to 11 and satisfactory in the sixth form.

Students enter the college with broadly average levels of attainment, but this varies from year to year. During their first three years at the college, students make good progress so that results for Year 9 pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science have been consistently above average. Over time, progress in Years 10 and 11 has been less rapid. However, good teaching, improved systems for whole-school tracking and monitoring, and targeted support for those most at risk of underperforming have ensured that all students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress and meet challenging targets. As a result, 64% of students achieved five or more A* to C grades at GCSE in 2006. This figure is above the national average.

Students reach standards at A level that are in line with the national average. Most students achieve well. However, results at AS level have been disappointing and, given their starting points, students in Year 12 make less progress than expected.

Through its own thorough self-evaluation, the college identified the performance of boys as a concern. To ensure these students made good progress, a number of timely

measures were introduced to raise standards of boys' achievement. Initial impact is positive. During the course of the inspection, inspectors observed no difference in the rates of progress between boys and girls. Progress in nearly all lessons observed was good or better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good throughout the college, including the sixth form. In the sixth form, students participate enthusiastically in many of the opportunities to enrich their studies, such as helping younger pupils, sports leadership, and leading whole school charity activities.

Overall, students' attendance is very good and they are keen to become well-educated, confident young people. They are exceptionally polite, friendly and behave well because they realise this makes living in a community so much easier. Very good relationships based on mutual respect are the norm in this very well ordered college. Students report that incidences of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Students are very proud of the contribution they make through the work of the college council and know they 'make a difference' to their college. For example, college 'buddies' care and support other pupils by once a week spending the first half hour of the day helping younger pupils with homework, reading, or simply listening to concerns and helping them find solutions. The college council has been instrumental in improving lunches; although, students recognise that there is still some way to go in encouraging each other to make healthy choices and participate fully in the range of after college sports activities. The college's sensitive but firm handling of students who smoke is beginning to pay off and a significant number of these students are now enrolled in a 'smoking cessation' project. Students have a good understanding of the dangers of illegal drug taking.

Students display good understanding of the diversity of British society. They talk enthusiastically about the exchange visits with a school in a city and how it has helped them understand and respect different cultures and traditions. Pupils are well prepared for the world of work and talk confidently and knowledgeably; they have growing organisational and financial skills learned from 'industry days'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching is good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory and improving in the sixth form.

Typically, teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is challenging, lively, interactive and makes good use of information and communication technology. Lessons are planned well and include work and support that is well matched to students' abilities. Teachers are developing effective opportunities within lessons to assess what has been learned. Homework is used well to reinforce learning and develop independent study skills. As a result, students clearly enjoy their lessons, are keen to learn, discuss work with confidence and work well together. The underlying benefit is the good and sometimes outstanding progress they make in their learning. Systems for assessing what students can do are well developed in Key Stage 4 and impacting positively upon learning outcomes. Systems in Key Stage 3 are effective and currently being extended.

Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory and improving. The best teaching is lively and challenging, and fosters good habits of independent learning. Students respond very well to this. Systems for checking on students' progress are secure. As a result, they understand how they can improve their performance and visibly grow in confidence and maturity as they move through the sixth form.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good throughout the school, including the sixth form. It is constructed to meet the needs and aspirations of the students well. It is built on the students' prior attainment and experiences, and it promotes enjoyment and achievement.

The curriculum is broad and offers a balanced choice of GCSE, AS level, A level and vocational courses. All students follow a short course in religious education. The school is moving towards a personalised curriculum, particularly for those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are at risk of underachieving. Their needs are met through alternative curriculum packages. Others have a good programme of basic skills support, sometimes both. More able students can take additional academic courses. Close links with local employers augment a good work experience programme. There is a good range of extra curricular activities, particularly in the performing arts and sport. Work-related learning, basic skills and citizenship have a high profile in the school. However, the school recognises that cross curricular delivery of work related learning and citizenship is variable. The school is developing very good partnerships with external organisations, which are supporting, enhancing and, in some cases, providing creativity across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college's outstanding level of care, guidance and support for all its students is at the heart of its work. Relationships are excellent and students report they feel safe and secure. Good risk assessments ensure that they are safeguarded well. Very good levels of advice and support are available from form tutors, heads of year, Connexions or other agencies that work with the school.

Vulnerable students are particularly well supported through early identification and partnerships with a small number of highly committed education and health professionals. Very effective support programmes are put into place and their impact is evaluated weekly. Students really value this and say that these interventions make a real difference to their behaviour both in and out of the classroom.

Induction arrangements from Year 6 to Year 7 are outstanding and ensure that students settle quickly to college life. This is because staff go the extra mile to ensure that friendship groups are not broken up, parents and students are familiar with college systems and teachers are fully aware of students' prior attainment. Considerable time and energy are spent in helping students choose the right options at GCSE and, as a result, students settle well into Year 10 knowing they have made well-informed and appropriate choices. Equally, staff go to great ends to ensure that students go to work experience placements of their choice.

Students' academic progress is recorded, enabling teachers to pick up on any extra support or challenge needed. Students are keenly aware of what they need to do to improve and reach the next highest level or grade. Students in the sixth form appreciate the good care, guidance and support they receive.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The college's developing leadership and management are good and innovative.

The headteacher, ably assisted by his leadership team, has successfully created a shared, inclusive vision of raising standards and promoting students' personal development and well-being through opportunities for increased creativity. His bold steps to devolve leadership and delegate responsibility throughout the college has empowered staff to develop and model a wide variety of teaching styles and make good modifications to the curriculum that more closely meet the differing needs of students. His leadership is outstanding. Communications between the college's leaders and staff – a weakness in the previous inspection – are now good and ensure good practice is shared effectively, for example in teaching. A further outstanding aspect of leadership and management is that of the college's specialist status, particularly the commitment to, and its impact in, the wider community. Its deserved good

reputation is spreading across the region and more widely. However, good plans and successes have not always been clearly articulated to parents.

The college has a good understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses. However, inspectors find the overall effectiveness of the sixth form to be satisfactory rather than good. Plans for improvement are of good quality and the recently appointed head of the sixth form is already putting such plans into place.

Governance is outstanding. Governors support the school very effectively and hold it to account for its performance. They are not afraid to ask searching questions and are provided with information of good quality that allows them to do so. Together with the headteacher and business manager, they ensure that resources are managed appropriately.

The college runs very well on a day-to-day basis and is geared to students making good progress in all aspects of their learning and development. As a result of this progress, the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support, and the improvements made since the previous inspection, inspectors judge that the school, including the sixth form, has good capacity to improve further.

Inspection report:Woldgate College, 1–2 November 200611 Annex B

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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
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	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
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	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	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?	1	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?	2	3
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	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

Woldgate College

92 Kilnwick Road

Pocklington

York

East Yorkshire

YO42 2LL

1 November 2006

Dear Students

As you are aware, Mrs Cressey, Mr Chick, Mr Cromey-Hawke, Mr Henderson and I recently visited your college. On their behalf, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. We greatly appreciated the time you spent talking to us and found your comments very helpful as we conducted the inspection.

You will be delighted to hear that we agree with Mr Bower and the college community that Woldgate is a good college that enables you to make good progress in your learning and personal development. The college cares for you very much and, as a result, we have graded care, guidance and support as 'outstanding'. You do so well because Mr Bower's leadership and that of the governing body is also outstanding. Your teachers are empowered to make your lessons lively and interesting through a variety of teaching styles. We could see how much you enjoy learning and coming to college by your very good attendance and good standards of behaviour. Like you, we were also impressed by the good curriculum that meets your differing needs. We can see the difference being part of a Specialist Arts College has made to you and your community.

Your college has had many successes, not least a growing and appreciated sixth form, and has good plans for the future. We have asked Mr Bower to communicate these more clearly to your parents. We have also asked that the good teaching we saw becomes a more consistent feature for those of you studying in the sixth form.

We really enjoyed inspecting Woldgate College but what impressed us most of all was you, the students. Your pride and commitment to your college, your good levels of maturity and your appreciation of all the staff do for you show what good citizens you are.

We wish you all every success for the future.

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools