

Newsome High School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107761
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309498
Inspection dates	14–15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Paul Lowery HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	663
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Wall
Headteacher	Mr P Gittins
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Castle Avenue Newsome Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD4 6JN
Telephone number	01484 226570
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector seconded to Ofsted and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Newsome High School is an 11 to 16 specialist sports college. The majority of its students are White British, with around a third from different minority ethnic groups. Levels of social deprivation and entitlement to free school meals are well above average. The school has an above average number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is high. The school has resourced provision for students with hearing impairment and for those with a physical disability. It is a hub school for the local schools sports partnership, has a gold Sportsmark, Silver Award Artsmark, and Investors in People status. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is providing students with a satisfactory standard of education. Achievement is satisfactory. Standards are below average but have started to rise. The school recognises that it needs to continue this improvement, especially by raising standards in Key Stage 3 and in English across the school. Leadership and management are good, under the clear direction of the new headteacher who is providing a strong vision for the school's development. Students and parents point to the considerable improvements made across all aspects of the school. The leadership team have established good systems of self-evaluation and are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have put in place effective strategies to secure improvement, with the main focus being to improve students' attitudes towards learning and to raise the standards of teaching.

Students' personal development is good. Most students say they enjoy their education. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory, as demonstrated by students' general politeness and consideration for others, although some low level disruption takes place in some lessons when there are inconsistencies in behaviour management. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory with a significant amount of good or better teaching. Good support is provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who communicate through signing. Students who have more complex needs and who receive additional targeted support are making good progress. However, the effectiveness of support in mainstream classes for students who have additional needs is variable. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good provision at Key Stage 4. Sports college status is increasing opportunities for involvement in sporting activities and raising participation rates. The school is working effectively with local schools, the college and businesses to offer work-based learning. Older students appreciate the range of courses on offer. In contrast the Key Stage 3 curriculum offers a traditional range of subjects and the school rightly identifies that it needs to review this curriculum in order to ensure it stimulates students, enabling them to make better progress in their studies. Attendance is satisfactory and steadily improving. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving and most students are clear about their targets; however, the quality of marking is variable across the subjects. Students say they feel safe and are well supported without fear of being bullied; overall the quality of care is good.

Improvements to behaviour and attendance, the reductions in exclusions, and the strengthening of the progress students make in lessons, have all been achieved in the relatively short time since the new headteacher has been in post. The progress already made in these areas indicates that there is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement at Key Stage 3 and in English across the school.
- Ensure the Key Stage 3 curriculum better meets the needs and interests of all learners.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good, including greater consistency in the use of behaviour management systems.
- Ensure marking indicates clearly to students what they need to do to improve so that they can reach the next level.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

A significant proportion of Year 7 students start school with standards that are below average and with poor literacy skills. At the end of Key Stage 3, standards are still below average, in English in particular. The improvement of students' literacy skills is a key focus in all subjects across the school. At Key Stage 4 standards since the last inspection have varied. The proportion of students obtaining five or more higher level GCSE passes has been well below average. However, results from modular examinations taken in 2008 coupled with evidence from coursework indicate a significant rise in standards achieved this year. Students overall make satisfactory progress. However, there are pockets of underachievement, in particular at Key Stage 3. Evidence from lessons and the analysis of students' work show progress and the standards reached, whilst variable across subjects, are now starting to rise.

Students who have complex learning needs have good support from teaching assistants in lessons and outstanding support by specialist staff in withdrawal classes, and as a result make good progress. However, the effectiveness of support in mainstream classes for students who have less complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities is variable; work is not always sufficiently tailored to meet individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students feel safe and adopt safe practices. Vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities commented that they feel safe in lessons and when moving around school. The presence on site of a community police officer further contributes to students' sense of personal safety. The majority of students increasingly adopt a healthy lifestyle: eating healthily, participating in a variety of extra-curricular and school sports activities. Students make a positive contribution to both the school and local community, organising seasonal events, collaborating with the residents' association on projects, and raising funds for charities. Attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory and improving, but the school identifies it needs to continue to focus on ensuring behaviour management is consistently applied across the school. Attendance rates are satisfactory and continue to improve.

Staff give a high priority to students' personal development and their preparation for adult life. There are outstanding opportunities for students to gain experience in the workplace through placements and links with the local business community. The majority of older students are undertaking at least one vocational course and all benefit from the popular enterprise activities. This is enabling students to become better prepared for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The strengths of teaching and learning are in the good relationships and effective use of praise and rewards. As a result, students are generally well motivated and keen to learn. Very well organised and expert support, provided through specialist withdrawal groups, promotes the achievement of students with more significant or complex learning needs extremely well. However, despite these strengths in teaching and learning, there is still wide variation in the

quality of teaching. Where there is more effective teaching, good procedures for assessment involve students in evaluating how well they are doing; lessons are carefully planned and work is well matched to the students' particular needs. Consequently, lessons proceed at a good pace with a lively range of activities and students' rate of learning is good. However, in less effective lessons, work is not always suitably adapted for the needs of the students and opportunities for students to work independently are limited. This means that higher attaining students are not sufficiently challenged and lower attaining students struggle to complete their work.

Although most marking of students' work celebrates their efforts well, it does not always show the students clearly enough what they need to do to improve so that they can reach the next level. The majority of teachers are now confident in managing students' behaviour. This means that most lessons proceed smoothly. However, in a small minority of lessons, where classrooms are not so well organised, students' behaviour can on occasions interfere with their learning. All students are provided with clear targets which are starting to impact on raising aspirations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. At Key Stage 4 it is meeting the diverse range of student needs. An increasingly flexible curriculum is motivating students in particular those at risk of disaffection. The popular vocational and work-based courses, delivered by the local collegiate of schools, the college and business, are well planned and effectively coordinated. The school has plans in place to revise the curriculum for Years 7 to 9 from September 2008; currently consisting of a traditional range of subjects and lacking a focus on providing students with the skills they need for further learning. Overall, the curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for students to use ICT as a tool to support their learning and the school has identified this as an area for continued development. The use of interactive whiteboard technology, which can bring the curriculum alive for young people, is variable across the school. The school provides a good range of clubs and enrichment activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh programme, which are all well attended by students. The curriculum is further enriched by days when the formal timetable is suspended and students are given good opportunities to explore aspects of citizenship and enterprise.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school places significant priority on the care, guidance and support it provides to its students. This is a place where the needs of each individual child matters. Students are aware of who to turn to for advice and guidance; they feel well supported and report that their views are listened to. The views of students are sought and they contribute to improving the quality of life in school, such as recent developments in library facilities and dining arrangements. Staff know their students well. The school works well with external agencies to provide good pastoral care. All students are well supported, including vulnerable students, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, through robust and rigorous pastoral care systems and a range of other effective strategies which meet their needs well. Academic guidance systems are satisfactory and provide appropriate information about career pathways and work place opportunities. Guidance through marking, however, is inconsistent. Child protection and health and safety practices are robust and meet statutory requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has ensured that all members of the school community have an explicit understanding of the standards expected. This has contributed to the significant improvements made to behaviour, the work done in lessons and the quality of teaching. Parents express confidence in the leadership and the impact this is having on the school. Typically one reported: 'the atmosphere around the school is now totally different. Expectations have increased phenomenally, with obvious results.'

The leadership team has established good systems of self-evaluation; all departments now effectively contribute to this process and use this information to inform their planning. Specific plans for the next stage of the school's short and medium term development are set. However, the school recognises it needs to strengthen its longer-term planning and link this more closely into future financial planning. Whole school target setting is satisfactory; with an increasing focus on ensuring targets raise the aspirations of learners. Teaching and learning are systematically monitored and are supported by a good programme of professional development for teachers and support staff. Subject leaders have been supported to take part in national training programmes with the result that departments are now effectively focused on raising standards. Additional resources have been brought into the school and these are being used imaginatively to upgrade the teaching accommodation, sporting facilities and social areas. Students have welcomed these improvements and feel an increasing sense of ownership of their school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed to the school's development and have a growing understanding of where improvements are required. Governors have reviewed their own effectiveness and increasingly recognise the need to question senior staff and lead the school's longer-term strategic development.

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Annex A

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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Inspection of Newsome High School and Sports College, Huddersfield,

HD4 6JN

I am writing to let you know the judgements we have made following our visit to your school. Thank you for your help and taking the time to talk to us during the inspection. Your comments were important in enabling us to come to our conclusion that Newsome High School provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Your headteacher and staff have worked tremendously hard to make improvements to your school. They have ensured it is an environment where you feel safe, where care and support is good and considerable improvements have been made to facilities within the school. Many students commented how teaching had improved. We were pleased that so many of you were proud of your school and the way students and staff now get on well with each other.

During our visit we noted that some students in Years 7, 8 and 9 were not making as much progress as they could. We saw that when lessons were not carefully planned, some of you lost interest and your behaviour disrupted the learning of the rest of the class. We found that unless marking is detailed you were not clear how to improve your work. We noted that in Years 10 and 11 the wide range of courses on offer was motivating students and provide a good basis for future study or employment. In contrast, the Year 7,8 and 9 programme needs updating to in order to provide students with the right skills for their future studies.

We have asked the staff and governors to concentrate on:

- continuing to raise standards, in particular for those in Years 7 to 9, and in English across the school
- ensuring the Key Stage 3 curriculum better meets the needs and interests of students
- ensuring teaching is consistently good and carefully managing behaviour in all classes.

You are already supporting your school to change. I trust you will continue to work with Mr Gittins and the staff in order to enjoy even greater success in your studies.