

Roundhay School Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108076
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	309591
Inspection date	6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Linden Phillips 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1541
6th form	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Gillian Hayward
Headteacher	Mr N Clephan
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2004
School address	Gledhow Lane Leeds West Yorkshire LS8 1ND
Telephone number	0113 3931200
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of the school's work to improve students' progress, the improvements to classroom practice, the quality of the curriculum, and the extent to which the school's inclusive approach supported students' personal development and well-being. Inspectors gathered evidence from observing lessons, speaking with staff, students and school partners, and scrutinising documentation and questionnaires completed by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Roundhay School and Technology College is a larger than average comprehensive school within the inner-city ring-road of Leeds. The school includes a higher number of students eligible for free school meals than is the average. Students arrive from a variety of ethnic and family backgrounds and a higher than average proportion of students do not speak English as their first language. There are more students with statements of special educational needs than in most schools and the school offers some specialist provision. Attainment on entry includes a broad spectrum, and overall it is broadly average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, Chartermark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Roundhay School is a fully comprehensive and inclusive school which provides an outstanding education for its students, so they attain high standards and achieve very well. A clear commitment to the value of every child shines through and is immediately apparent in the celebration of their achievements on display. A determination to help every child achieve of their best has provided a strong focus and direction for the school's work. The school has addressed issues from the previous inspection and has continued to improve so that achievement and standards have risen from above to well above average. Students gain higher than average results in the majority of subjects in Year 11. Staff work hard to maintain excellent partnerships and productive links with partner primary schools, with outside agencies to support individuals who need it, and with the business community to offer work experience, mentoring and master classes. The school feels that it has the capacity to maintain and improve the level of achievement and inspectors agree.

Achievement is excellent and standards are well above average. Students' attainment when they arrive is broadly average. They go on to attain standards which are above local and national averages in all core subjects at Key Stage 3. In their GCSEs or equivalent courses, they attain considerably above average results, at both the grades A* to C measure and also the measure which includes higher grades in English and mathematics. Data from 2006 indicated that progress made was, overall, below average, but unvalidated data from 2007 show that this measure has been transformed. Most students now make excellent progress during their time in the school. This is due to the school's intense work to support those students who find learning difficult. The school's rigorous monitoring of progress indicates that no group of students underperforms. In 2007, the school exceeded its targets for Key Stage 3 and improved on the proportions of those gaining English and mathematics at the higher grades at GCSE. Boys overall have not achieved as well as girls but the school has given this effective attention and can show overall improvement. Posters of boys and books are displayed around the school reflecting the encouragement of boy's reading and the evident pleasure in literature inspectors saw in lessons.

The school has identified individuals who are not achieving as well as they were expected to and supports their learning in a variety of ways. Each group of subject teachers offers extra help for underperforming students. Learning mentors, drawn from support and teaching staff, as well as mentors from business and the wider community, work with students to identify barriers to learning and reinforce their goals and ambition. One strength of this work is that the school includes all children in this process and not only those at significant borderlines of attainment. Monitoring systems are well embedded into departmental planning and are being constantly revised and refined.

The high level of achievement is due to good, and some outstanding, teaching and is supported by highly effective intervention work for individual students. The school recognises that teaching overall could improve further and staff are working to make their assessment of students' work, and the detailed feedback on what they need to do next to improve, the key features of moving teaching to be outstanding.

The school's support for students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is excellent. Attendance is outstanding. This reflects students' enjoyment in coming to school and their appreciation of the work staff do on their behalf. Students' planners regularly celebrate even small achievements and parents respond positively. Students are encouraged to contribute to

the wider society in a number of ways; for example, by raising money for a number of local and international charities, by taking part in school forums, by sending letters - as 500 students did - to the Prime Minister to support FairTrade, and by volunteering for the recent Saturday open day when 70% of students responded. An excellent tutorial observed during the inspection guided younger children through a subtle appreciation of the impact of disasters on young people and their families in other countries. Parallels were well made with students' own experiences and the teacher helped the class to explore difficult concepts while developing oracy skills by expertly helping students to phrase their understanding more exactly.

Students generally feel safe and agree that racist bullying is rare because of well understood 'zero-tolerance'. Behaviour is generally good and the school responds well to pockets of poor behaviour; for example, a police officer visits the school for a day each week and reinforces good behaviour. Parents are encouraged to become involved to improve behaviour. Child protection arrangements are in place. The school supports its students to take up a healthy lifestyle with many sporting opportunities and the promotion of a healthy diet.

The number and range of clubs, sports, residential and other out-of-school activities is exceptional. Pupils expressed the excitement they had felt during trips abroad, and on the 50 educational visits which included 930 students. Staff offer over a hundred enrichment opportunities before and after school, at lunchtimes and at weekends. Take-up is high and the school monitors attendance to check that children eligible for free schools meals and from different ethnic groups are taking equal advantage. The school's environment is bright and welcoming, with vibrant displays of learning materials and students' work enlivening classrooms.

In tandem with supporting well-being, the school offers excellent care, support and guidance. This rests initially on a wide range of close work with a large number of partner primary schools, for example by staff working jointly across subjects (including history, art, mathematics, music and physical education), and in careful preparation to ensure full access to secondary school for those pupils with physical disabilities. Inspectors were impressed by the full and detailed knowledge staff have about individual students, their progress across subjects and the reasons for giving particular support. Staff liaise closely and effectively with outside agencies about the care and academic support for looked-after children. Parents, too, are given very detailed guidance about how they can help their children be happy at school and learn well. Each year group has its related parents' handbook explaining what will be taught in each subject and the best ways for parents to help. Parents receive very full information about the school's planning and who to contact with concerns. Their views are canvassed regularly and acted upon, for example the 'Black Parental Focus Group' has improved mutual awareness. All parents who responded to the questionnaire were extremely positive about their children's experiences. Many wrote glowingly in support. Two typical comments were: 'I wish all children were lucky enough to receive the same education and care as my child' and 'Our children have been educated in a diverse and culturally changing environment, giving them excellent citizenship and preparing them for life in modern Britain. There is a fantastic sense of purpose and community in the school'.

The school is adapting its curriculum to better meet the needs of students and provides good opportunities and a variety of progression routes. The impact of Roundhay's specialist status can be seen in the wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) and digital resources in classrooms and the increasing breadth of study. Applied GCSEs are offered in school, and vocational technology courses are now offered in conjunction with local further education colleges. There is, however, limited opportunity for linguists to study a second new language, and work-related learning has yet to permeate subject teaching.

The headteacher provides strong and inspirational leadership for the school. The school's vision for improvement permeates the work of the senior team and middle managers. Considerable attention has been given to developing the skills of teachers with management responsibilities. This shared approach to improvement is reflected in the whole-school evaluation of its effectiveness which is informed by very thorough self-evaluations by all subjects and areas in the school. These are incorporated into a clear school development plan. Governors are both supportive and challenging. Governing body organisation is very good and there is a sure grasp on the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school provides good value for money. There is a common willingness at all levels to focus an unflinching gaze on where students have not been as well served as the school would wish, and consequent steps towards improvement are clearly outlined, followed and refined. As a result, the school has shown consistent and sustained improvement, by using a wide range of information to set aspirational targets for attainment, and staff and students work within good relationships to achieve them. The strength of the school is its firm inclusiveness. Every child matters equally at Roundhay and this is a significant factor in the achievements of its students. Students concur with the school's motto of 'Courtesy, Co-operation and Commitment' and those principles underpin their success.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Despite a small dip in some results in 2007, students at Roundhay have been the top performers in Leeds, based on average points scores, for the past five out of six years. Scores which measure progress made by comparing results achieved at Key Stage 4 with results achieved at the sixth form place the school in the top 12% nationally. Students' results are outstanding and the sixth form continues to grow in popularity. The head of sixth form and teachers know each student individually and exceptionally well and personal development is promoted very successfully. Pastoral care is also outstanding and is much appreciated by students. Sixth-formers agreed that staff and mentors 'are always there for us'. The school specialises in advanced courses and, because of the variety of courses on offer elsewhere, does not offer courses at Level 1 or 2 which means that the curriculum does not include those who have not gained five A* to C grades at Key Stage 4. Teacher tutorials provide opportunities to discuss grades and how to improve; however, the sharing of best practice across all subjects could be further developed. Students are encouraged to move on to further study post-16 and the school follows and celebrates their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the considerable information held about students' progress to inform effective assessment for learning, so that pupils know what they need to do next to improve and continue to develop as independent learners.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	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	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We would like to thank you for the welcome and hospitality you gave us on our recent visit to your school. It was a pleasure to talk with you and your comments were perceptive and helpful. You told us how much you enjoy school and that is apparent in lessons and in your excellent attendance. We thoroughly enjoyed seeing displays of your work, and the care most of you have taken in your class work.

You are right to be very proud of your school. It is outstanding. Your teachers and support staff work well with you so that you make very good progress and achieve very high standards. Staff give an enormous amount of their time in school - and of their own time too - to offer many opportunities for clubs and sports, and to make sure that you are well cared for and are safe. One of your parents said, 'The pastoral care has been of a very high standard - we are confident that staff at Roundhay know who our children are and they work hard to ensure they feel safe in school'. Inspectors agree.

Guidance from the school for you and your parents is excellent. All the parents who responded to our questionnaire were very positive about Roundhay and many of them wrote to say exactly why, mentioning the work of teachers, support staff and mentors in building self-confidence and 'valuing the whole child'.

We agree with the school that there are still things which can be better. You mostly behave very well, but on occasions not. Teaching is good and some of it is excellent; you are given very good support when you are not achieving as well as you might, and teachers are working to improve all your lessons. We have asked the school to use information about your progress to give you clear advice as to what you need to do next to improve your level of work.

To play your part, you need to continue with 'Courtesy, Co-operation and Commitment': courtesy in and outside of school; co-operation with each other, with your teachers and support staff, and a continuing commitment to be the very best you can be.

Our best wishes for your future.