

The Market Weighton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118076
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	312801
Inspection dates	23–24 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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	654
6th form	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jayne Thomas
Headteacher	Mr Phil Tibbetts
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2005
School address	Spring Road Market Weighton East Riding of Yorkshire YO43 3JF
Telephone number	01430 873450
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average comprehensive school situated in a semi-rural area. Students' social and economic background is above average. The proportion of students entitled to claim a free school meal is well below average. The great majority of students are of White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This friendly and happy school provides a satisfactory education for all its students. Whilst celebrating its successes, the school is well aware standards have dipped recently and that improvements can be made in a number of areas. The school's own judgement of its effectiveness matches that of inspectors. The majority of parents praise the school and are pleased with the quality of education their children receive. They particularly like that fact that every student is known as an individual. However, some parents expressed concerns about a variety of issues, principally that they felt the school did not always listen to their views and take them into account when reaching decisions.

Most students enjoy school. They understand the important contribution made by diet and physical exercise to the development of a healthy lifestyle. Good numbers take part in extra-curricular activities. Sport, drama and music are particular strengths and the school's well-regarded concert band has a significant role in the good contribution made by students to their local community. Students feel safe in school and usually get on well with each other. They are keen to take on responsibility for others, for example, as members of the school council but are disappointed at the extent to which their views are listened to and acted upon. They have satisfactory basic skills to prepare them for the next stage in their education or the world of work.

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the school with average levels of attainment and reach average standards in national tests by the end of Years 9 and 11. This is a disappointing picture for the school because in 2005, standards were above average at the end of Year 11 and in 2005 and 2006, they were above average at the end of Year 9 and achievement was good. In 2007, the school did not meet its targets for either Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4, and achievement overall was satisfactory. Some students are not making enough progress and some subjects are under-performing because the proportion of teaching that is good or better is not currently high enough. There are inconsistencies in teaching and assessment. Although the school takes good care of each student and child protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements, academic guidance has not been effective in enabling students to progress well enough to reach challenging targets. Improved tracking systems to monitor students' progress are now in place but as yet these systems have not had an impact on raising standards and achievement. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good plans to broaden and develop it. Students value the support provided through the school's 'HUB' centre for inclusion in meeting a range of their needs. This good facility is shared with other members of the community. Links with support services and other business and education organisations are good.

The management of the school has been through a period of change. The new headteacher and a new chair of governors have been in post only since the beginning of this term. The previous headteacher was seconded to another school in January 2007 and the deputy head took over as acting headteacher for three terms. The senior management team, under the leadership of the acting headteacher, ensured that the school ran smoothly during this time. However, there is a need to increase the pace of change. The school's strategies for improvement have not always been sufficiently monitored and evaluated for their impact on standards and achievement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Results for both AS and A2 examinations in 2007 varied considerably between subjects, but were broadly average and showed improvement from the previous year. Most students successfully completed their courses and were able to fulfil their higher education ambitions. The school seeks to provide for a wide range of students through its open access principle. As a result, around a third of students joining the sixth form have relatively modest attainment at GCSE. However, their overall achievement in their sixth form examinations is satisfactory given their starting points. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The sixth form is well managed. Strategic planning is in its early stages but analysis of sixth form performance and the monitoring of students' progress are developing effectively. Students have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. At present, only those students who are suited to traditional academic courses are well served by the curriculum, but there are plans to introduce alternatives to AS and A level courses. Students enjoy being in the sixth form. They feel well supported by their subject teachers and tutors, particularly when planning their future education choices. However, as at the last inspection, enrichment opportunities are not well developed. Students say they would welcome increased responsibility and the chance to contribute more widely to the life of the whole school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by ensuring greater consistency in teaching, learning, assessment and target-setting.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation so the school has a clearer picture of what is working and what is not.
- Improve communication with, and response to, parents' and students' views.

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

Grade for sixth form: 3

In 2007, students reached average standards at the end of Year 9. Students' achievement is satisfactory, given their starting points. Data shows that boys performed less well than girls. Average attaining girls did less well than in the recent past. Standards were above average in both English and mathematics in 2006 and now they are average. The school is currently reviewing its strategies for intervention and aiming to accelerate the progress of all students.

Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 4 and there was a slight improvement in the percentage of students gaining more than 5 A*-C grades. The proportion of students gaining grade C or above in English and mathematics is average but is declining over time. At GCSE, students achieved well in art and design, business studies, English, music and physical education but less so in languages, history and dance. In the sixth form standards are satisfactory. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress from a lower starting point.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Most students are keen to learn, particularly when involved in practical activities. The majority of students are well-behaved in classrooms and around the school. The recently devised and implemented 'Behaviour for Learning' programme is having a positive impact on standards of behaviour in the school and contributing to a reduction in exclusions. However, agreed procedures are not yet applied consistently so that in a few classrooms, where poor behaviour and inattentiveness are not challenged quickly and strongly enough, the pace of learning slows. Attendance is good. Students are confident that on the relatively few occasions when bullying occurs, it is usually dealt with effectively by staff.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, the proportion that is good or better is not currently high enough to raise standards substantially or to lead to good student achievement. In a small number of lessons, students make insufficient progress. The school's judgement of the quality of its teaching generally matches that of inspectors, indicating that the school knows where improvements are needed. Throughout the school, relationships are cordial and most students are well disposed to learning. Their eagerness reflects the quality of teaching they experience. In the most successful lessons expectations are high and the pace is brisk; lively and varied activities engage and sustain students' interest. Teachers ensure that students understand what it is they are learning and why. They regularly check progress towards these objectives and promote effective learning by involving students in assessment activities. Students make good gains in these lessons. Many of the less effective lessons move at a slower pace and provide work that lacks variety and challenge. Where work is dominated by the teacher, and where students are not encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, interest fades and students do not engage with their work. Lesson planning does not always draw upon the available information about students' current learning to prepare for and meet individual students' needs closely enough. Consequently, too many lessons reflect a 'one size fits all' approach and work is not tailored precisely enough to fully extend the more able or support those of lower ability. The use of marking as a means of providing guidance on how to improve work varies too widely. As yet, the impact of school initiatives to improve teaching, learning, and assessment has been too inconsistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Only those students who are best suited to an academic curriculum are well served by a good range of subjects. These include a second language and early entry to GCSE in Key Stage 3. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been broadened to include more

vocational subjects, very successfully in the case of the media course. However, this vocational aspect of provision is underdeveloped and numbers on these courses are relatively low. Links with the Connexions service provide good careers guidance. Work experience placements are greatly valued by students in Year 10 and help them to gain a good understanding of their options for further study and employment. Effective, alternative provision for a small number of students at risk of disaffection in Years 10 and 11 has improved their attendance, behaviour and enjoyment, as well as their readiness to enter employment or further training. The delivery of personal, social and health education and citizenship through designated days and occasional lessons does not promote continuity and progression in students' learning and hinders effective assessment. Enrichment and lunchtime and after-school activities are a strength of the school and are greatly enjoyed by the large numbers of students who participate. Sport is particularly strong, though girls would welcome more opportunities to take part.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school provides a good quality of pastoral care for all its students and is particularly effective in meeting the pastoral and academic needs of its most vulnerable, for example those in care or at risk of exclusion. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and risk assessment is robust, so that students feel safe and secure in school. Regular training is provided for all staff in these areas. Good relationships with a wide range of appropriate outside agencies contribute well to this provision. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory. Recently implemented procedures for monitoring students' academic progress have not been in place long enough to be used consistently or have had a significant impact on raising standards. The school recognises that further improvement is needed to procedures for tracking the progress of students who have minor learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good links with primary schools enable students to transfer smoothly into Year 7 and guidance on options, higher education and careers enables older students to make informed choices about their futures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The head teacher has been in post for two weeks. He is currently reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Raising attainment and achievement are key priorities. Attainment on entry is assessed accurately and the school is assembling useful data to measure students' progress and set targets for improving their performance. The use of this information is still uneven but senior staff are working steadily to develop the expertise and confidence of teachers in order to improve individual performance and plan for different levels of ability. Strategic planning sometimes lacks consistency and too many initiatives have been started then not followed through, so that their impact has been lost. School managers have correctly identified areas where improvement is needed but the strategies used to deal with them have been less effective. The school improvement plan has appropriate priorities and is a reasonable foundation for moving the school forward. The governors have not been sufficiently involved in the school's self-evaluation. However, they are keen to become more directly involved in strategic planning, evaluation and decision-making.

Sound financial management has ensured the school is effectively reducing a budget deficit. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Most issues from the last inspection have been resolved, although achievement has declined to satisfactory overall. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3	3
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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	3	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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	3	
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

25 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of The Market Weighton School, East Riding of Yorkshire,

YO43 3JF

Thank you for the welcome you gave us and for your help in finding our way around school when we visited you. Yours is a happy and friendly school that provides you with a satisfactory level of education. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your opinions. Many of you told us you had pride in your school.

Most of you enjoy school and are making satisfactory progress. You generally behave well and you assured us that you feel safe in school. The new 'Behaviour for Learning' policy is improving behaviour. A minority of you do not act appropriately and this slows down learning for everyone. Many of you have good social skills, and are courteous and well mannered.

The school is achieving good examination results in some, but not in all subjects. We found that standards could be higher. If you work hard with your teachers, you should be able to achieve even better results. The school cares well for your pastoral development but systems to check regularly on your progress and make sure you are on target are satisfactory, rather than good. The school is working hard to develop a better system. You feel that you receive good advice about the next stage in your education or training and we agree.

The curriculum is an academic one and we know that the school has plans to offer more vocational subjects so that you have a wider choice at GCSE and in the sixth form. You told us how much you enjoy sport and other extra-curricular activities. We agree that there could be more opportunities for the sixth form to take responsibility and pursue a wider range of activities.

Some students and parents feel they would like to be consulted more and we have asked the school to do this. The new senior managers of the school are keen to bring about improvements and will need your cooperation to be successful.

If you put in the effort needed, you will do well.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw

Lead inspector