

Cottingham High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118079
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	312803
Inspection date	8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Angela M Headon 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	1796
6th form	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bruce Paynter
Headteacher	Mr Thomas Darbyshire
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2004
School address	Harland Way Cottingham HU16 5PX
Telephone number	01482 847498
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, students' personal development and well-being, teaching and learning, curriculum, care, guidance and support, leadership and management and the effectiveness of the sixth form. Evidence was gathered from a range of school documentation, assessment data, observation of the school at work, discussions with staff, students and chair of governors and parents' questionnaires. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments in its self-evaluation were not justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

Description of the school

Cottingham High School is a larger than average 11-18 comprehensive school, serving a mixed socio-economic community. The number of students eligible for free school meals is similar to national figures, as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). The majority of students are White British. The school was awarded specialist media arts status in 2004. It holds a number of awards including Sportsmark, Artsmark, Healthy Schools status and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Cottingham High School is a good school with an inclusive ethos. The school has a strong commitment to improvement and provides a welcoming, orderly and safe environment within which students can learn. The school's media arts specialism has contributed significantly to the school's continuing development.

Students' achievement is good overall. Students enter the school with average levels of attainment and leave with standards which are significantly above average. The school's GCSE results have continued to improve with more than two out of every three students gaining five or more grades at C or above. Consistently since 2004, the school has also successfully increased the number of students attaining five or more A* - G grades. Standards in both English and mathematics are above national figures at Key Stage 4. Students of all ability levels also obtained good results in science, media studies, business studies, religious education, textiles and German. Levels of attainment at Key Stage 3 also increased in 2007 in mathematics and science, with a significant improvement in English. Good progress is evident. Standards at Key Stage 3, however, remain broadly average. The school recognises the need to continue to raise standards across the curriculum between Years 7 and 9. Students with additional learning needs are comprehensively monitored and make good progress in their learning.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students enjoy coming to school and attendance is satisfactory. In lessons, students are interested, attentive and work hard. Behaviour in lessons and around school is generally good. However, concern was expressed by some students and parents about the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously and has been actively involved in the further development of security around the site and the behaviour policy. The healthy eating agenda has high priority and is having a positive effect on the choices that students make. The curriculum allows students to contribute to the community, and students' achievement and participation provide a good foundation for their economic well-being.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan their lessons well using a common format and students understand fully what they are expected to learn.

Students' behaviour is well managed and lessons are typified by good relationships and good attitudes to learning. Interviews with students show the majority have very positive views of the teaching they receive. They particularly enjoy opportunities for group or paired work. The school recognises that pupils are capable learners and it continues to promote 'assessment for learning' in all subjects. The use of skilled questioning to clarify students' understanding was evident in a number of lessons. The availability of resources, enabled by the specialist status, also allows teachers to support activities in lessons which cater for different learning styles. However, although work for the full ability range is planned, this is not always implemented effectively in practice. The school has made very good progress in developing systems to monitor students' progress and this information is used to set targets for improvement. The school is continuing to review its targets to ensure students of all ages and abilities are fully challenged.

The curriculum is good and there are outstanding features. It provides relevant pathways for students of all abilities, which enable good progress in both their academic studies and personal development. Specialist media arts status augments the provision often in very ingenious and effective ways. An example is the way in which themes thread through the whole curriculum for a fixed period and culminate in a presentation to parents that is often of commercial quality.

Choice, both academic and vocational, in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form is quite exceptional and encourages students to stay in education. Students value and enjoy the large number of extra-curricular opportunities provided, particularly in sports and the arts which complement the timetabled curriculum.

Care, guidance and support are good. There is a shared commitment to ensure that all students do as well as they can both academically and personally. As they move through the school they are tracked carefully both for attitudes to study and rates of progress towards their targets in subjects. They understand these well and value the frequent feedback that they receive. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding are in place and meet requirements. Students say that they feel safe in school and value the fact that they know that any bullying will be dealt with robustly and effectively. Vulnerable students and those at risk of disaffection benefit from a secure safety net of extra support and activities designed to help them to develop into confident young people.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong and focused leadership with a clear educational direction. He is very well supported by highly effective senior and middle leaders, who are fully involved in improvement planning. The school is aware of its strengths and has identified areas for improvement that follow a clear rationale, with a well defined focus on raising students' achievement. The school has continued to refine systems for monitoring teaching and learning. These are good, involving leaders at all levels. The 'sharing good practice' initiative successfully promotes collaboration between faculties to ensure consistent practice. This, together with the focused development of behaviour management strategies, allows students to make good progress and achieve well. Governance is good. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and monitor its performance very effectively. Parents are highly supportive, although some did not consider the school fully took account of their views.

The specialist status has been very well used to broaden the curriculum and to improve performance and aspirations across the school, particularly through the use of media and digital technology in lessons and the development of strong external links. The school works in excellent and productive partnership with a range of organisations, including business, and further and higher educational institutions. Although accommodation is generally outdated, the school has worked hard to maintain classrooms to a good standard. The school provides very good value for money and in light of the good leadership, the school's capacity to improve further is also good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is very effective. Achievement is good and examination results are consistently above the national average. A wide range of courses, both academic and vocational, developed through the well organised consortium arrangements provide students with an excellent choice.

Induction arrangements are thorough, ensuring students elect to follow courses that are suitable and build securely on their attainment at GCSE. The personal care and guidance that students receive are excellent, helping them to overcome any potential barriers to their learning. Teaching is good overall and relationships between teachers and students are very positive. Students receive frequent feedback on attainment and targets. Students' personal development and well-being are also good. They speak positively about the school and regard the inclusive ethos and sense of community as key strengths of the school. The head of sixth form is passionate

about providing students of all abilities with the best possible opportunity for study, extra-curricular activities, personal guidance, and information on their progress. He manages the sixth form with an enthusiasm and determination that permeates through to staff and fully motivates the students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards further at Key Stage 3.
- Strengthen academic targets further to ensure consistent challenge for all students.

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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?	2	2
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	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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 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	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	2
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?	2	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	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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	
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

9 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Cottingham High School, East Riding of Yorkshire, HU16 5PX

As you are aware your school was recently inspected. I am writing to thank you for your welcome and contribution, and to let you know our findings.

You will be pleased to know that we agree with your headteacher, staff and governors that Cottingham High School is a good school. Here is a summary of our report.

- Overall, you make good progress and achieve well in examinations.
- You enjoy coming to school and appreciate the care, support and guidance you receive.
- Teaching is good and the majority of you behave very well and work hard.
- There is a very good curriculum with a wide range of courses and activities to choose from.
- You have a good quality sixth form.
- Your school is very well led and managed and has good plans in place to improve further.

So that the school continues to do well, we have asked the school to focus on the following areas:

- Continue to raise your standards, particularly at Key Stage 3.
- Further strengthen your academic targets, to ensure you are always challenged to reach the highest levels in your work.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at the school and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon HMI