

South Craven School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121692
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	314084
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Cox 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	1704
6th form	311
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Iain Harris
Headteacher	Dr Andrew Cummings
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Holme Lane Cross Hills Keighley West Yorkshire BD20 7RL
Telephone number	01535 632861
Fax number	01535 632859

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector on secondment to Ofsted and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

South Craven is a larger than average school with a sixth form. Students come from a variety of backgrounds, including rural and urban, and advantaged and disadvantaged communities. Overall, the intake is of average socio-economic status, although there is low unemployment and generally low income in the catchment area. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. A small minority of students come from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is well below the national average. Those students who take up their eligibility for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although those with a statement of special educational needs is close to the national average. The school has specialist Engineering and Technology College status, Artsmark, Sportsmark, Healthy Schools awards and Investors in People status. The school has had Foundation status since 2006 and will become a Trust school in June 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

South Craven is a good school. It is held in high regard by the majority of parents and those within the immediate community. Some students travel long distances to attend because of its good reputation and wide range of subjects on offer, particularly in the sixth form. Achievement is good and standards are above average because a high proportion of lessons are lively, engaging and enjoyed by students. In these lessons students are clear about what they have to do, they work well together and make good progress. However, not all lessons are planned well enough to inspire and challenge the full range of abilities and some parents have expressed concern that their children are not being pushed hard enough in their learning. While the school uses data effectively when analysing the performance of groups of students, it does not track the performance of individuals well enough and consequently not every student reaches their full potential.

The curriculum is a strength of the school and it is outstanding in the sixth form. It offers throughout a wide range of opportunities to meet the needs of the students and their future aspirations. However, literacy across all subject areas in the main school is underdeveloped. The enrichment of the curriculum, including extra-curricular activities, is impressive and supported by the high participation rates. The specialist status has helped provide wider opportunities to study courses that match well the needs of the community. Partnership involvement with local industries, commerce, further education colleges and a university is outstanding and enables students to experience learning in different contexts.

Personal development and well-being across the school is good. The school provides good opportunities for students to lead a healthy lifestyle. Students respond well and make the most of what is on offer. The local business community speak well of the behaviour of students and their respectful attitudes towards others in the village. This is a reflection of what happens within the school. The school provides good care, guidance and support. There is strong provision for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who achieve good progress in line with other groups. Academic guidance is well structured and effective, although more work needs to be done when teachers plan lessons to ensure individual needs are sufficiently well met.

Leadership and management of the school at all levels are good. Priorities for improvement are clearly focused on raising standards. Governance and the school's self-review processes are outstanding. Governors regularly review the progress made by the school using well understood and effective self-review methods. They support well and challenge robustly the headteacher and subject leaders, holding them firmly to account for students' development. The school knows itself very well because it evaluates what it does regularly. The move from Foundation to Trust status is well reasoned and is seen by the school as a key to further improvement in standards. The school has dealt effectively with issues from the last inspection, represents good value for money and demonstrates good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school has a growing sixth form which provides a good quality of education for its large number of students. Standards improved in 2007 and were broadly average. Results in the applied subjects are above national averages. Given the low attainment on entry to the sixth

form, achievement overall is good. However, some students in Year 12 do not make sufficient progress and a small number fail to complete their courses; as a result the school has introduced new strategies to enhance the effectiveness of initial guidance which is beginning to have an effect. Students have access to an outstanding curriculum that offers a very broad range of academic and vocational courses satisfying their needs very well. The 'graduation' system allows students to take responsibility for their own achievements by broadening their learning to include key skills, citizenship, and a personal challenge such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award. They participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them. Students feel that the strongest aspects of teaching and learning are the productive relationships they enjoy with their teachers and the extensive opportunities for them to work independently. What most frustrates them is the large size of some classes and limited resources.

Students told us they were very well cared for: 'If you need help with anything, you've only to ask your teacher. They give up their time willingly to help us.' Another added: 'They work us hard.' The effective support provided for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make progress at a similar rate to others. Students and their teachers know how well they are doing because of the good tracking and monitoring systems in place that helps identify any underachievement. Personal development is good and sixth formers are mature and sensible members of the school. They organise and chair the student council and are trained to help with paired reading in the main school. They adopt tutor groups in Years 7 and 8, offering advice, support and guidance. Good careers advice, work experience for all, and activities like the successful Young Enterprise programme in Year 12, prepare students well for their future. The sixth form is well led and managed. Its work is robustly monitored as part of the school's overall self-evaluation process and it acts upon students' recommendations. Its improvement agenda is accurately focused and achievement is rising. The extent to which it works in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being is outstanding. One impact of the effect of the school's specialist status can be seen in the increasing number of students opting for mathematics and science which is contrary to the national trend.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of lesson planning so that the monitoring and evaluation of progress made by students of all abilities is used more effectively for them to reach their full potential.
- Ensure literacy in all subjects across the main school is a common feature, so that students become more independent in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' attainment on entry is broadly average. The above average standards reached at the end of Year 11 means that a high proportion of students make good progress. Most groups achieve equally well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although a small number of students learning English for the first time do less well. The school is aware of this and is setting about making improvements. There is clear evidence to show that most students make much better progress in Years 10 and 11 than in Years 7 to 9. This is the result of an improved curriculum well matched to meet the needs of students. Regular checking of students' progress and prompt intervention and support helps to raise achievement. The 2007 GCSE results revealed that three quarters of students gained good grades with half the students securing good grades including English and mathematics. The accurate school information

indicates that the number of current Year 11 students expected to achieve good grades will continue to rise. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2007 were slightly above average overall but with above average standards in mathematics at the higher levels. Based on the school's tracking data this improving picture is set to continue this year but with a wider degree of success across most other subjects. In some subjects, however, not enough account is taken of students' individual needs and opportunities to improve their progress are missed.

Students' attainment on entry into the sixth form is below average due to an open entry policy. Standards reached at the end of Year 13 in 2007 were broadly average although in the vocational subjects above average standards were gained. This represents good progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' attitude and behaviour, around the school and in lessons, are good. The school has a carefully considered policy of allowing upper school students off site at lunchtime. At this time students are supervised by a senior member of staff who patrols the area. Local shopkeepers are supportive of the school and this policy and commented to an inspector how well behaved and courteous the students were to each other and other customers. One shop owner prominently displayed the message: 'Don't worry, we're all behind you, good luck in your exams.' Students show respect for each other and enjoy very good relationships with their teachers. They say that when bullying occurs the school deals with it effectively. They know who to turn to if they have issues that need to be addressed. Attendance is good and students say they feel safe and secure and enjoy school. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school welcomes the increasing numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. It is aware of the growing cultural diversity within the school community and is working to ensure that students have positive experiences of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Students understand the benefits of living healthy lifestyles through the taught curriculum and enjoy a wide range of physical and other activities during and after school. Their contribution to the wider community through fundraising activities is good; for example, the support given to Manorlands, a local hospice. Students take on responsibilities within the school, such as librarians and through membership of the year and school councils, enhancing their personal development. The school council is effective in seeking the views of students which have contributed to school improvement. Recent issues, subsequently acted upon by the school, have included the refurbishment of toilet facilities and the introduction of recreation areas for younger students.

Preparation for later life through the development of good basic and interpersonal skills is good. Students' understanding of work-related issues is supported well through strong links with the local college. The Year 8 'Work Wisdom Event' provides an early insight to work-related learning. Extended work experience opportunities are available to upper school students including sixth formers, which helps them make appropriate decisions about their own future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning both in the main school and the sixth form are good and, according to older students, have improved recently. In lessons that are well planned, learning is brisk and students know what they have to do. Good levels of independent and collaborative working are evident and students show high levels of enjoyment. This was seen in an outstanding music lesson where students developed confidence in their musical ability, then had the opportunity to perform in small groups where they were able to assess each other's progress.

In lessons where planning is less well structured the full ability range of students is not met and the teachers' expectations are less demanding. Consequently, students are not challenged sufficiently well enough to meet their full potential, enthusiasm for learning decreases and progress is limited. Students value the positive relationships between themselves and staff, they have good attitudes to their learning, they attend well and behaviour is good. Where teaching assistants are deployed, they are used effectively, supporting students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensuring that they progress their learning in line with others.

Students know their targets, but in the main school are not always clear on how to achieve them. Marking of students' work across and within subjects is variable in quality and impact, and this affects learning. Particularly good practice is found in mathematics and across the sixth form generally. The school is aware of these shortcomings and is working hard towards greater consistency of good practice to secure improved learning in all areas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good with many strengths. The innovative lower school curriculum provides opportunities for students in Years 8 and 9 to select additional courses including an additional language and various art subjects. When choosing subjects to study in Years 10 and 11 students can tailor their own curriculum within the innovative 'pathway' system. They can select from a wide range of GCSEs, including vocational courses depending on their needs and aspirations. Provision for numeracy is good, but the provision for literacy across all subjects is less well established.

The specialist status has a very positive impact on the curriculum because it provides excellent opportunities for students to develop their learning and skills. These match very well the needs of the local economy. The specialism helps by providing a wide range of vocational courses, enabling the school to work very effectively in partnership with other local schools and colleges. The school has used the additional funding to help improve the quality of accommodation and resources for the whole school. These include improved information and communication technology (ICT) facilities and moves to modernise the way teachers work and the way students learn. Skills learned from team working within school, and workplace experiences, have prepared the students exceptionally well for future working life. This is strengthened by students improving their basic skills and their commitment to working hard.

There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which are available to all and are very well attended. Over half of the students take part in additional arts including a tenth of the school participating in the annual drama production. Physical recreational activities include archery and weightlifting and the school's specialism provides additional technology and enterprise opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

There is a very effective pastoral care system. The overwhelming majority of those parents who completed the questionnaire felt that their child was safe, well cared for and received good personal support. Students recognise and value the support given by their form tutors. The move from primary school is managed well. Year 7 students tell of feeling welcomed to the school and that 'many of the older students looked after us'. Students in Year 9 and their parents receive clear guidance on their option choices and understand the 'pathways' available within Key Stage 4. For those moving into sixth form, guidance is effective although the school recognises some shortcomings which has led in the past to some Year 12 students dropping out. Students value the input of older students already on courses. Academic guidance and support is strong throughout the school. Students are aware of their targets and the school's student progress monitoring system is well established and understood by all. However, marking is variable in quality across subjects and not all students are clear about how to reach their targets in lessons. The use of assessment information across subjects is inconsistent in helping students of all abilities progress in line with their capabilities.

The school is working to ensure that the increasing proportion of minority ethnic students are well integrated into the school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support enabling them to progress as well as others. Sixth form students support younger children with their reading and are actively involved in established programmes as part of the school's anti-bullying initiatives. Effective child protection policies and safeguarding procedures are in place. Support is made available to vulnerable students through well conceived and appropriate projects.

Termly health and safety assessments enable the school to address any issues ensuring that safe working practices are implemented. Systems for monitoring health and safety matters and recording accidents are appropriate.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision of where the school should be. He sets very clear direction and is very well supported by his senior colleagues, including a dedicated and efficient administration staff. Governance is outstanding. They hold the school to account very well. They challenge the school robustly and are wholly supportive of the school's move to Trust status. Throughout the consultation process the school took account of the views of students, parents and the primary schools that feed into South Craven.

The school recently achieved re-designation for the Investors in People award in recognition of developing its staff. There are some very good examples of senior leaders being able to widen their experiences, such as being a part of the extended leadership team where they are given responsibility and held to account for improvements. Middle leaders support the school well and there exists a common sense of purpose in raising standards. Good systems are in place for providing subject areas with funding.

The school knows itself very well. There is a well established cycle of self-review at all levels. This process is well structured, aids improvement and is regularly scrutinised by the headteacher and the governing body, who acknowledge strengths and identify areas needed for improvement. Financial management is strong. The school has secured significant funding for a new building programme. The Skills Centre will provide teaching and learning facilities for the already successful 14 to 19 Partnership. Construction will start in the near future.

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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	3
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	2	
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	1
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	1	1
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

Inspection of South Craven School, Keighley, BD20 7RL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we recently inspected your school. We are pleased to share our findings with you. Overall, we judged South Craven to be a good school.

There is much for you to be proud of. We found you very polite, courteous and friendly towards visitors and each other. Those of you who have the privilege of going into the village at lunchtime behave very well and the local businesses appreciate your custom and the way you conduct yourselves. The school provides you with good opportunities for your development and you take these seriously. You told us that you enjoy participating in the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. The curriculum in the sixth form is excellent because it offers such a wide range of subjects to study.

The headteacher and his staff including the governors are working very hard to provide you with the best education possible. To assist them in this I have asked them to look closely at making improvements in two areas. First, we noticed that some lessons are not planned well enough to engage and move you on in your learning. You can help the school in this by telling your teachers if you find the work too easy and making sure that you make the most of every lesson. Second, the school needs to do more with improving literacy across all subjects, particularly in the main school. If you develop your skills in this area it will help you to learn more effectively.

There is much to look forward to at South Craven and I hope that you seize every opportunity provided to you. I wish you every success in the future. Good luck!