

# Nidderdale High School and Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121700
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314086
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Harrison

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	454
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss S Reid
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr David Read
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Low Wath Road Pateley Bridge Harrogate North Yorkshire HG3 5HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01423 711246
<b>Fax number</b>	01423 711859

<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection date</b>	2 November 2007
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, the quality of teaching and learning, and the school's effectiveness in overcoming variations in progress between different groups of students and across different subjects. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form, national published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons, and analysis of parents' questionnaires.

Discussions with staff, pupils and a governor were held. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This small comprehensive school serves the town of Pateley Bridge and the surrounding rural area. Almost half the students come from outside the catchment area. Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds but their social circumstances are generally above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of students with a statement of special educational need are both average. The school has been a specialist school for science and the visual arts since 2004.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where students achieve well within a friendly and supportive community. Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school and of the care that it provides. Students value the small size of the school so that, as they say, 'Everybody knows each other and we get a lot of individual attention from teachers'.

Students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They behave very well both in lessons and around the school. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Students benefit from recently introduced music and drama opportunities. They participate enthusiastically in a good range of sporting and physical education activities which make a valuable contribution to encouraging regular exercise and a healthy lifestyle. Students particularly enjoy their own version of a popular talent show which provides opportunities for them to develop self-confidence and an appreciation of other students' effort and skills.

Students arrive in Year 7 with standards that broadly match the national average. They make good progress throughout their time in school so that, by the time they reach Year 11, their standards are above average overall. Hence their achievement is good. However, the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\* to C is close to the national average and not as good as the overall picture. Also, boys' progress is not quite as good as that of girls. Both these weaknesses are largely the result of a curriculum in Years 10 and 11 which, although satisfactory overall, does not fully meet the needs and interests of students, particularly boys. There are not enough vocational opportunities for students to enable them to achieve as well as they might at the higher grades. The inclusion of compulsory French or German in Years 10 and 11 is unpopular and has a negative impact on boys' attitudes and achievement. By contrast, the Work Related and Personal Support (WRAPS) scheme is having a very beneficial effect on students' progress and makes a strong contribution to the good achievement of lower-ability students and the few who are at risk of becoming disaffected.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and this is the main factor in enabling students to achieve well. Relationships between teachers and students are very positive and underpin a good atmosphere for learning. Teachers are well informed about their subjects and examination requirements and make it clear to students what they are expected to learn. Nevertheless, some lessons are rather slow and undemanding for the more able students so that their progress, although satisfactory, could be better.

The care, support and guidance that students receive are good. Pastoral care is very good and students are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Many parents comment appreciatively on the very good arrangements for supporting their children as they move from primary school into Year 7. The school has good systems for monitoring students' progress, and providing extra help where students are not 'on track' to achieve their targets. However, these arrangements have only existed in their present form since September and so have not had a significant impact on standards.

The school makes satisfactory use of its specialist status. A wider choice of courses has been established in science and art. Several exciting projects involving, for example, glass making and the study of marine environments, have linked the two specialisms to enliven students' experience. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that these subjects have not so far been

as successful in contributing to raising standards across the school and this has already been identified as an area for development.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is determined to raise standards further and staff are enthusiastic, both about the progress so far and the prospect of improvement. Governors make good use of their high level of expertise to support and challenge the leadership team. The headteacher is acutely aware of any weaknesses and this has led the school to underestimate students' overall achievement. In all other respects, the school is accurate in assessing its performance and takes sensible and decisive action to overcome any deficiencies. As a result, there are clear signs of improvement. For example, in 2007 there was a significant increase in the proportion of students gaining five or more grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, which is particularly important for the future prospects for employment of those students. This rising trend, together with the introduction of the new tracking system, indicates that the school is now well placed for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that the work set in lessons meets the needs of all students and, in particular, is always sufficiently demanding for higher-ability students.
- Extend the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 so that students have more opportunities to follow vocational courses that match their interests and enable them to reach higher standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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
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
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



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

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school yesterday. As you know, the purpose of the visit was to check how well the school is doing. I am particularly grateful to those of you who talked to me about your experiences in school. The information and opinions you provided were very important in helping to make judgements.

Everyone I spoke to told me that yours is a good school and I agree. One student gave a very good summary of my report when he said: 'This is a good place to learn'. I really enjoyed the friendly atmosphere around school and I know that you all appreciate the very good care the school provides for you. The teaching you receive is good so that you generally make good progress and do well in tests and examinations.

Nevertheless, even in a good school there are a few things that could be improved.

In particular, the work in lessons is not always difficult enough for the most able students among you. I have asked teachers to make sure that lessons move more quickly for those students and that there are always tasks that really make them think. I hope you will rise to the challenge and try hard as the work gets more demanding.

Several of you told me that there should be a wider choice of subjects in Years 10 and 11 and, again, I agree with you. I have asked the school to provide more vocational courses because they will provide you with a chance to get even better examination results and to prepare for your future careers. I hope that you will enjoy any new subjects and make a big effort to do well in them.

I wish you all well for the future.