

Winifred Holtby School Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118061
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	319276
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Richardson 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Downing
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Liddle
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
School address	Midmere Avenue Leads Road Bransholme Hull HU7 4PW
Telephone number	01482 826207
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school is situated in South Bransholme, Kingston-upon-Hull. The school is much larger than the national average and serves an area that has twice the national average deprivation. Many of the students come from the largest council housing estate in Europe. The school serves a community with a lower than average proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups, and whose first language is believed not to be English. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. While the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average, the proportion of students who have statements of special educational need is less than the national average. The school has held Technology College Status since 1999 and this has been extended to 2008. The school achieved the NAACE Quality Mark for ICT provision in 2005. In 2006 the school achieved Hull Healthy Schools Award and National Healthy School Status. In 2007 the school was awarded Basic Skills Quality Mark. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust awarded the school membership of the Most Improved Schools Club for each of the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. The school achieved Eco Bronze award in spring 2007 and the status of Investors in People was renewed in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school was given notice to improve at its last inspection in May 2007. The areas for improvement identified were the achievement of students, the quality of teaching and the attendance of students. Achievement and standards and the quality of teaching have all shown substantial improvement. Attendance has only shown slight improvement overall. However, the attendance rate in Years 7 and 8 are satisfactory at around the national average.

The school's senior leadership team has been effective in developing a good distributed management system. There is a common vision for providing students with greater life chances through the best education possible. The staff believe their views are listened to, and they are well informed of management decisions. It is evident that staff know the priorities for improvement in the school. The leadership team is capable of bringing about further improvements as evidenced in improvements to achievement and standards, teaching and behaviour. The completed parental questionnaires show that they have good confidence in the management of the school and in the provision the school is making for their children.

The school has been active in improving the quality of teaching and students are aware, and appreciative, of the positive impact this has had on their learning. Inspection found teaching to be good with some outstanding practice. Teachers have good relationships with students and clearly demonstrate that they want students to succeed. There is, however, some inconsistency in the quality of information pupils receive to help them to improve. The focus on improving teaching and learning has had a positive impact on a range of outcomes for students. Staff and students give accounts of significant improvement in the behaviour of students and the quality of teaching over recent times, although a minority of students continue to show poor behaviour. Teaching is systematically monitored through lesson observations which are aimed at bringing about improvement. They have put effective monitoring systems in place for tracking students' progress and setting targets. The senior leadership team has used the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme well to promote good practice in the school.

There has been an upturn in performance of students overall that is linked to improved teaching. The standards and achievement of students in the school are satisfactory overall. In its self-evaluation the school has recognised the need to raise standards further, particularly in Key Stage 3. The senior leadership team and staff have been successful in improving the overall progress students make from entry to the school through to the end of compulsory schooling.

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and the care guidance and support they receive is good. The school is ensuring that students receive guidance on staying healthy and is promoting the adoption of healthy life styles. The curriculum students are following is providing a good range of opportunities for participation in activities which promote their personal development including their future economic wellbeing. Students attending the school regularly enjoy their education and feel safe from bullying and harassment of any kind. They make it clear that any incident of bullying is effectively dealt with.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards and achievement of students further, particularly at Key Stage 3.

- Ensure consistent and high quality feedback to students to help them to improve.
- Continue to challenge the poor behaviour of the minority of students and to promote better attendance, particularly in Key Stage 4.

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

Students enter the school with standards which are broadly in line with the national average. Historically the standards reached by students at the end of Key Stage 4 were below average and students made inadequate progress. However, standards have improved and the large majority of students now make satisfactory progress. This is shown by the increase in the percentage of students who achieve five good GCSE passes: 48% in 2006 to 54% in 2007. The present Year 11 are well placed to reach their targets, as 46% of them already have four good GCSE passes and in Year 10 this figure is higher at 58%. These successes reflect well the school's technology status and the significant improvement in the quality of teaching.

During Key Stage 3 students make less progress. Although students are reaching higher standards, and the amount of progress they make is increasing, students are not at the expected levels by the end of the key stage. Historically, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make inadequate progress. However, the progress these students make is improving and they now achieve at the same rate as their peers.

The leadership and management have focused strongly on improving standards and achievement by developing the quality of teaching. This development is enhanced by targeted support from the school's specialist technology status. The better teaching and learning has impacted on the standards reached but there is a legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 3 this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. They treat each other with respect, know the difference between right and wrong and are willing to discuss moral issues. Most students behave well in lessons and they move around the school in an acceptable manner, although there is still a minority whose behaviour affects the learning of others. Most parents support this view, although a minority feel that the poor behaviour of a small number of students is detrimental to the safety and learning of others. Students themselves generally feel safe and secure and say that the rare incidents of bullying, and racism, are dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Despite the good efforts of the leadership and management to encourage higher attendance, improvement overall is slight and attendance remains significantly below the national average. In Key Stage 3, however there is clear improvement to around the national average. Poor attendance adversely affects the progress and achievement of a significant number of students in Years 10 and 11.

Many students take advantage of the prodigious range of out of school enrichment opportunities. Students who have school lunches are able to enjoy the healthy options available, but too many take advantage of the unhealthy options available in the local area. Year group

student councils have been instrumental in bringing about change, for example, introducing school trips and student lockers and improving social areas. The developing vocational curriculum and personalised learning programmes are beginning to raise students' aspirations, and the percentage of students committing to continuing education is increasing. The positive emphasis placed on developing students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills is contributing to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school with some elements of outstanding teaching. The efforts made by senior and middle leaders, and by all the staff, to develop teaching skills and improve learning are successfully raising standards and promoting achievement. Teachers share an enthusiasm and commitment to continuing improvement. Typically, teaching is brisk and energetic with high expectations and good relationships. Lessons move at a rapid pace, often with timed activities. Judicious use of music enhances learning by creating a positive context for learning. Teachers use a stimulating range of high quality resources to create an engaging learning environment. Interactive whiteboards are used skilfully to support a wide range of activity and to bring the wider world into the classroom. Students work well in groups discussing their work and sharing ideas. Most students say that they enjoy lessons, particularly those where there is a variety of activities and opportunities for them to contribute. A minority of students have a less positive attitude to learning, but teachers manage behaviour well and do not let the few who would spoil the enjoyment of lessons distract the majority of students from their work. Teachers use academic tracking data well to guide their planning and to ensure that the right level of challenge is provided for everyone. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included in all activities and receive effective support when they need it.

Assessment is increasingly a strength. A new marking and assessment policy is bringing about greater consistency in the quality of feedback given to students. The very good practice in some areas, for example, in English and the humanities, is spreading across all subjects. Until recently, some students did not always know their targets or the level at which they were working, and some marking was superficial. The new assessment policy focuses more clearly on how well students are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities provided by the school are good. They respond to the needs of individual students and take account of the local context. For example, all courses studied at Key Stage 4 have clear progression routes to local providers of further education and training. Flexible approaches to grouping of students at Key Stage 3 enables vulnerable students to successfully access the curriculum. This ensures that they now make progress in line with the rest of the school. All students choose at least one vocational subject at Key Stage 4. Shortcomings in the allocation of time for physical education are compensated by a good uptake of students in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. A full allocation of time to meet requirements for physical education has been planned for September.

The appointment of a numeracy coordinator has resulted in an improved strategy to develop numeracy through the Kingston-upon-Hull Numeracy Certificate delivered through the school intranet. Specialist college status has had a good impact particularly in developing teachers' use of interactive whiteboard technology and adopting structured approaches to teaching and learning. This results in greater engagement of students in their learning. All students now have a discrete IT lesson and work is in progress to pilot a new IT diploma to accredit students' learning. The school has detailed plans to build upon their current inclusive and personalised curriculum for the forthcoming year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support are good. Students are well prepared for transition through extensive visits culminating in Year 6 students attending Winifred Holtby for one full week in July. This reassures students and allows them to approach secondary schooling with confidence. Vulnerable students are identified early and good provision is made for them in the home bases and through the support of teaching assistants. The school works effectively with a range of external agencies to provide support for these students, for example the Psychological Service provides workshops for parents. Looked after children are effectively supported by a member of staff with specific responsibility

Policies and procedures for child protection and safeguarding meet requirements. Health and safety procedures are in place, but some risk assessments require reviewing. Students feel safe and say that any bullying is dealt with effectively by staff. The school has ensured that there is a suitable medical room that is manned by a full time member of staff.

Students in Year 9 are well prepared for subject choices through citizenship lessons and sessions provided by the Connexions service. All Year 10 students have a careers interview and work experience with an interview in Year 11 for further guidance if required. Students are well supported in applications for further education and training.

There are effective systems for monitoring students' progress and setting targets. Most students know their targets and the levels they have attained. When this is combined with helpful marking, they have a clear view of what they must do to improve. The level of care is good, and students at risk of disaffection and those returning from non-attendance are provided with support from the bungalow and house provision in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide effective leadership and management. It is clear that teachers, including those with middle management responsibility have a clear understanding of the priorities for developing the school. There are good structures in place to engage staff in the drive for improvement.

The senior leadership team is seen by teachers and middle managers to be responsive and concerned to bring about improvement. The drive to improve teaching and learning is recognised to be successful by staff. Teaching is monitored through observations carried out by senior leadership and middle managers. The latter have been trained by senior leadership in a range of ways including joint observations. Joint observations by members of the senior leadership

team and inspectors showed the judgments to be accurate and scrutiny of records of lesson observations showed judgements are well evidenced and consistently carried out. Further monitoring techniques include scrutiny of students' work by senior leadership and faculty heads which give rise to feedback to departments. This feedback is unequivocal and describes strengths, areas for improvement and action points for departments and individuals. Full and useful records are kept that allow calibration of students' work and teachers' assessment and marking against the standards expected.

Staff feel very well supported by their managers and they describe positively the clarity with which the senior leadership provide direction. Middle managers describe how senior management has responded to ideas arising from departments and they feel they participate in decision making and bringing about change. The senior leadership team collaborates well with others on a range of provision. For example, the local authority school effectiveness officer works with senior management to provide training for middle managers that they value and consider to be effective.

The governing body takes an active part in the life of the school. In the school's self-evaluation it is clear the governing body is believed to be increasingly effective. The governors have provided good support and challenge to the senior management team. Governors are associated with different subjects and projects in the school. For example, the governing body were engaged with school staff in commissioning the house facility for Key Stage 4 students with particular problems. They have worked to ensure the students who will benefit most from this provision are included. Students from the school council sit in on governing body meetings providing further strength to the governors' involvement in the school.

The management of financial matters is sound. Complex funding streams are well tracked and regularly reviewed. In the situation of declining numbers financial projections are used well to plan the future as accurately as possible. The recent local authority audit resulted in a positive report and the school achieved the Financial Management Standard in Schools in 2007. The senior leadership team has policies in place to cover all statutory requirements and child protection procedures are satisfactory. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

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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
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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
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 June 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Winifred Holtby School Technology College, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU7 4PW

On behalf of the inspection team I want to thank you for the way you helped us during the inspection of your school. Those of you who attend school regularly told us how you enjoy school and feel safe and free from bullying. On the whole we thought you showed good attitudes to your work in school and that your behaviour was satisfactory. It is disappointing that a small minority of students do show poor behaviour, but the school staff work hard to make sure this does not interfere with your education. We believe the school is doing a satisfactory job in helping your personal development and well-being. The care guidance and support you receive are good. The school is providing you with a good range of courses and activities that will prepare you well for carrying on in education, training or employment after you leave the school. We encourage you to make the most of the opportunities provided to contribute in lessons and to join in the good range of clubs and after school activities.

We believe that teaching in the school is good, although we think you do not always get the feedback you need to improve. The results of the tests and examinations you have done over the last three years show that, while standards are improving, you are not doing as well as the average for other schools and this needs to improve. As you try to do your best the teachers are improving systems that will give you the information you need to do better.

The improvements needed in your school include:

- raising the standards and achievement of students further, particularly at Key Stage 3
- ensuring consistent and high quality feedback to students to help them to improve
- continuing to challenge the poor behaviour of the minority of students and to promote better attendance, particularly in Key Stage 4.

With our best wishes for your future.

Ian Richardson HMI