

# Whitgift School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118067
<b>Local Authority</b>	North East Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	323193
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marianne Young HMI

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 (total)	707
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Chris Dixon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Rushby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Crosland Road Grimsby DN37 9EH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01472 887117
<b>Fax number</b>	01472 887634

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## Introduction

Whitgift School was last inspected in October 2007, when it was served with a Notice to Improve because of significant concerns relating to achievement and standards. This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Whitgift is a smaller than average sized secondary school situated in an area of private and public housing to the west of Grimsby. Free school meal entitlement is above average and there are more students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usually the case. Relatively few students are from backgrounds other than White British. There are a small but increasing number of students for whom English is an additional language. The school has gained both Sportsmark and the Healthy Schools Award.

## 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 of 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Whitgift is an increasingly effective school that provides good value for money. The headteacher is tenacious in his determination to improve the school. Together with senior leaders and governors, he has established a relentless drive across the school to raise achievement and improve the life chances of all students. Consequently, in a short period of time, although standards remain below average, results in 2008 were significantly better than those in the previous years, especially for students in Year 11. These notable improvements have been underpinned by marked advances in the curriculum, the learning environment, and by effective assessment systems which enable staff to track students' progress in fine detail. Parents are very supportive of what the school gives and does for their children. One parent's view encapsulated several comments: 'I am proud to say that my child goes to Whitgift School'.

Students' behaviour is good and they report confidently that any incidents are dealt with well by adults. The school works closely with families, a range of external agencies and local industries to re-engage learners. This is reflected in students' improved attendance. Combined with the wider choice of academic and vocational paths, including the engineering diploma, the vast majority of students continue into further education or into the world of work. As one student reported, 'Everyone does their best so that they can stay on the diploma'.

Teaching is satisfactory. Some teachers are skilled in their understanding of how individual students learn, and build effectively on the learning that has gone before. However, this is not evident in all lessons. The school has invested much effort into monitoring lessons. Where needed, effective support is provided for individual teachers. However, the arrangements for sharing the existing good and outstanding practice more widely across the school have not yet had the expected impact. The school recognises that the regular, and otherwise effective, school monitoring procedures have not identified the variations in teaching quality well enough and its impact on students' learning and progress.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that each student's individual needs are met. Provision for students with substantial learning needs is well matched to their requirements and supports their progress well. There has been effective recent action to identify and meet the requirements of the increasing number of students with limited skills in the use of spoken and written English.

Much has been achieved since the last inspection. Staff work well together, they ensure that the school runs smoothly on a daily basis and there is a strong sense of unity. Highly effective and rigorous self-evaluation is used successfully to monitor the performance of the school. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly understood by leaders and managers at all levels. Together, with the students, they recognise and appreciate the improvements made so far but understand much still has to be done to improve things further and ensure that all students make the progress of which they are capable.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of the assessment information in order to plan lessons more effectively for all groups of learners
- Share more widely the identified good teaching that does exist in the school.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which will have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are broadly average, and students' progress and achievement are satisfactory. Standards are rising and students' progress has improved significantly since the last inspection. In 2008, the school achieved its best ever GCSE examination results. Students join the school with below average attainment levels. In recent years, the proportion reaching the expected level in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 has been too low, and students underachieved. In 2008, provisional results in these tests improved significantly for Level 5 in English, mathematics, and science, and for Level 6 in English and science. Whilst the school fell short of its ambitious targets, overall the unvalidated results were close to average, and students' achievement and progress were satisfactory.

Performance in GCSE examinations has also been inadequate in past years. Results in 2008 improved substantially. The proportion of students at the end of Year 11 gaining five or more A\* to C grades including English and mathematics rose to 37%, and the overall five or more A\* to C results increased notably to 54%. Very few students left school in 2008 without a qualification, in sharp contrast to previous years. Each of the school's challenging targets for GCSE were matched or exceeded. Despite this, not enough students achieved the highest A\* or A grades.

Inspection evidence shows that currently students are making at least expected progress. School tracking data presents a convincing picture that recent improvements will continue. Underachievement is identified and suitable steps are taken to tackle this. Students with additional learning needs make satisfactory progress because they are well supported.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Students report that they feel safe at school and understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit significantly from the meticulous attention given to their needs. Despite attendance being below average, the school is to be congratulated on reaching its government attendance target. The school continues to promote regular attendance and take effective steps where this is not the case. The recent changes to the curriculum are encouraging more students to attend frequently and to understand the importance of regular attendance. Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and responsible movement around the school during lesson changes, break and lunchtime. Students enjoy their school and are generally considerate in their behaviour towards other students and adults. They are courteous and welcoming. The school council is effective and other opportunities for students to take responsibility both within school and the wider community are being developed. These aspects contribute well to students' good moral and social development. The mixed-age tutor groups are valued by students and enable them to mix together and to make friends with others throughout the school. Students' understanding of the diversity reflected in multicultural Britain today is underdeveloped; however the improvement in basic skills ensures that they are now better prepared for future studies and the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to ensure that students make better than satisfactory progress overall. The best teaching engages students fully and, in turn, helps them to have a positive attitude to their learning and to enjoy their work. Where this good engagement is combined with challenging work that is suitably matched to their capabilities, students make rapid progress in lessons. The best lessons have a clear purpose, good pace, and a range of interesting and varied learning activities. In these lessons, students are clear about what it is they are expected to learn and why.

However, there is too much variability in the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 7 to 9. Not all teachers have adopted the school's approach to teaching and learning to the same degree. The emphasis across the school on the use of assessment ensures that many staff and students understand the way in which accurate information can help to improve students' learning. Target setting to support progress is widespread, although the process lacks some clarity. The effectiveness of marking and the guidance students receive about how to improve their progress are inconsistent within and across subjects. Lesson planning follows a common format, but does not always draw on available information about students' current progress to prepare for and meet individual student needs as well as it should. Too many lessons reflect a 'one size fits all' format, and work is not tailored precisely enough to fully extend the more able or support those of lower ability. As a result, the level of challenge is not always appropriate for every student in the class. However, the use of in-class support for those with additional learning needs is well targeted and effective.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good range of subjects, courses and wider learning experiences that fully meets statutory requirements. Significant and very effective steps have been taken to establish learning opportunities to support Key Stage 4 students in gaining wider certification including Whitgift being the lead school within the local authority for the engineering diploma. This improved choice of courses is contributing greater purpose to students' learning and effectively including some who had previously been hard to reach. The school is also proving highly successful in aiding students' transition to further learning or the world of work. The positive outcomes of these developments can be seen in students' improved progress, attitudes and attendance. A thorough and focussed review of the curriculum is giving managers a more detailed view of relative strengths and weaknesses, which is steering improvements well. For example, the programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship has been audited to ensure greater consistency. Additional opportunities, with links to other subjects, have been added at appropriate stages to reinforce identified aspects of students' personal development and contribute effectively to students' enjoyment of the school.

A wide variety of well attended visits, visitors, lunchtime and after school clubs and activities successfully broadens students' experiences. There are increasing opportunities for students to contribute to the local community although links with wider communities in the United Kingdom and beyond are less established.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The personal care of students is strong. Staff know the students very well and display good levels of concern for the needs of each individual. Child protection procedures and government safeguarding requirements are in place. Staff have undergone appropriate training to support their work. Provision for risk assessments is thorough and the school's effective action to improve behaviour continues to be successful. Students are positive about their care and this view is well supported by parents. Students say that bullying has reduced and they are confident that staff will help if there are any problems. Good links with outside agencies and effective use of support staff contribute successfully, particularly in the case of students with identified needs.

The school has continued to make improvements to the systems for assessing and monitoring students' academic progress. These now provide an accurate picture of how well each student is doing, with appropriate regular points established for review. Staff can therefore track progress well and identify particular areas that each student needs to improve. Students say that they are helped to understand what they need to do through the records on their 'passports' and their targets. Some teachers make good use of assessment information to help students take the next steps in their learning, for example in completing their projects. However, teachers do not consistently make use of the information in planning activities to meet the needs of students of different abilities in classes.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher, who is ably supported by his senior team, has generated a momentum of improvement which is understood and shared by staff and students.

The headteacher's determination that all students should achieve their potential by the time they leave Whitgift, is well supported. Senior leaders have successfully engaged staff in making some key improvements to provision over a short period of time. Rigorous evaluation of performance is undertaken and decisive actions taken as a result. This is clearly demonstrated by the impact some of these strategies have had in improving the achievement of many students. Despite recent improvements, senior leaders are not complacent and show resolution to improve further. Sensible priorities are identified within the school's raising achievement plan.

The quality and capacity of leadership and management are clearly evident amongst middle managers. They are empowered to take responsibility for the regular monitoring of performance within their subject areas, leading on whole school initiatives and identifying aspects that need to be improved. Focussed meetings between senior and middle leaders provide good opportunities to assess subject and student performance. The knowledgeable governing body are well informed, know the school and fulfil their role as critical friend well. They offer good support to the school while holding it to account through their regular evaluation of the impact of actions taken to tackle priorities.

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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	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	3
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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

14 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Whitgift School, North East Lincolnshire, DN37 9EH

Thank you for welcoming us during our recent inspection. We appreciated the time we were able to spend talking to many of you about your work and life at your school. Since the last inspection, a number of changes have taken place. Whitgift is now a satisfactory school with strengths in some areas. This is because staff have worked well together as a team to tackle the priorities that were identified at the last inspection.

Your teachers are listening to your views about the way you are taught and are thinking how they can make teaching better. A number of you told us that you enjoy lessons where you can get actively involved in different activities that enable you to think for yourselves. This means you are able to make better progress and more of you can gain good passes in examinations at the end of Year 11 as a result. Your attendance has improved overall. The new courses, especially the engineering diploma, are popular and well attended. You are well supported and guided by staff throughout your time at school. They provide good help for any problems you may have either personally, or for aspects of learning you find difficult.

I have, however agreed with Mr Rushby that the school needs to build on its current progress and improve further. In order to do so, the school should:

- make sure that lessons challenge you all;
- share more widely the identified good teaching that does exist in the school.

You have an important part to play in the continuing challenge to improve your school by attending regularly and working hard to do your best in all your subjects.

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

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector