

Royds Hall High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107755
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324648
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Joan McKenna

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 (total)	791
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Bostock
Headteacher	Miss Melanie Williams
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2006
School address	Luck Lane Paddock Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD3 4HA
Telephone number	1484 463366
Fax number	1484 222223

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Around half of the students at this smaller than average school are of minority ethnic heritages, a much higher proportion than is typical. The largest minority ethnic group is of Asian Pakistani heritage, with smaller numbers from other groups. Over a third of students speak English as an additional language; relatively few are at early stages of fluency, although this proportion is increasing. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need, however, is almost twice the national average, reflecting the resource provision for students with speech and language difficulties catering for 25 students from across the local authority. The school serves an area that is more disadvantaged than typical and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is above average.

The school has specialist status for science. It has gained the National Healthy Schools award and the local authority's Healthy Schools Standard at Gold Level and fast tracked to achieve the BECTA ICT Mark. There has been some instability at senior leadership level over the past few years, but this was resolved by the appointment of the current headteacher in September 2007.

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 because all aspects of provision are good, resulting in students achieving well both academically and personally. The school is well led and, despite the instability at senior level since the last inspection, there has been steady improvement in all areas of its work and its effectiveness. The school is demonstrating a good, secure capacity to improve further.

All students are highly valued as individuals. The pastoral care provided for them is a strength of the school and has some outstanding features. The way in which all students are cared for and supported is strong. The breadth and quality of specific support provided for students with additional needs is excellent. It ensures, for example, that students from the resource provision are seamlessly and successfully integrated into the life of the school. There are harmonious relationships between students of all ethnic heritages and their awareness of different cultures is good. There is a warm and inclusive atmosphere within the school. Students respect staff and behave well. Staff pay detailed attention to promoting students' personal development. Students feel safe and secure. The school's promotion of healthy lifestyles is outstanding, as is students' response to it. Students enjoy being members of the school.

Students enter the school with standards that are below the national average and are now reaching average standards by the time they leave. All groups of students across the school are making good progress. Good quality teaching promotes effective learning. Appropriate and interesting tasks that are well explained by teachers keep students motivated and involved in their learning. The curriculum has been broadened and developed since the previous inspection so that it is better meeting the needs of different groups of students. Students' progress is tracked and analysed thoroughly at senior level, and the information is used well to identify what extra support different groups and individuals need to keep them on track. Other leaders are now also involved in this process, which is helping them to take more specific action to improve the effectiveness of their work. However, the information about students' progress is not yet used fully by middle leaders and by teachers to promote the fastest and most consistent possible rate of progress across all subjects. Students are set targets to help them improve their work but do not always know in detail the action they should take to help meet them.

The school has made good progress in its development as a specialist college. Specialist status has enabled it to develop the science curriculum and share developments in teaching and learning more widely. Virtually all specialist targets are met. Support for science and mathematics has been provided in partner primary schools as well as courses for the local community. A specialist college management group allows the school to closely monitor progress in this area.

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides the school with very effective leadership which is giving a clear sense of purpose to its work. Effective teamwork is promoted across the school with a sharp focus on bringing about improvement. Staff morale is high. Governors are knowledgeable and supportive and ask pertinent questions to hold the school to account. Parents are positive about the school. 'There's a great atmosphere and real energy within the school – my child loves it and is flourishing' is a typical comment.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure middle leaders take more effective action to improve standards and promote consistent achievement
- ensure teachers take further steps to meet individuals' needs in lessons

- ensure students are well informed about how to meet their targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' achievement is good across the school and it is improving steadily. Standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 3, although they are rising. In 2008, there was a particular increase in the proportions of students gaining higher levels in English, mathematics and science in national tests. Following a steady increase in recent years, GCSE examination results in 2008 were in line with the national average. The proportion of students gaining five or more good grades including mathematics and English, although higher than the previous year and close to the school's challenging target, was a little below average. There was also some variation in results across subjects. Nevertheless, most of the targets set by the school were met. Different groups of students, including those from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally perform similarly well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Students generally respond well to the high expectations teachers have of their conduct, with orderly behaviour around the school and positive attitudes in lessons. Mutual respect is evident, resulting in mature and constructive relationships. The school is a cohesive community. Incidents of racism and bullying are rare and students report that any that do occur are dealt with very seriously. They understand very well how to be healthy through diet and exercise, and also know how to keep safe. The school seeks and values students' views. Students make a helpful contribution to school life, for example, through the school council and by reporting to the governing body. They also make a good contribution to the wider community, through, for example, charity fundraising and acting as sports leaders in primary schools. Students' enjoyment of school is evident. They participate well in extra-curricular activities and make good use of opportunities to develop broader interests, such as making programmes for Royds Hall television. The large majority of students attend regularly. They develop skills and personal qualities that will stand them in good stead in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to give clear explanations and to ask questions that challenge students to think carefully. A variety of activities are planned to keep students busy and engaged in their learning. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) to good effect to help stimulate students' interest. Teaching assistants usually provide effective support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they are able to participate fully. In most lessons, students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good because relationships are strong and teaching is lively. While good overall, there is some variation in the quality of teaching. A weakness is that, although teachers are aware of the needs and capabilities of the students in each class, they do not consistently use information about their progress to plan tasks that are matched closely enough to their needs. The quality of teachers' feedback to students on how to improve their work is variable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A major positive development in the curriculum since the previous inspection is the provision of three different pathways for students at Key Stage 4, which enables their different needs to be more closely met. There is a wider range of vocational courses for students to choose, alongside traditional academic courses. Alternative provision for students' with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is helping to improve their progress. The school is looking to increase flexibility within the curriculum at Key Stage 3. A more recent development is a well planned personal, health, social and citizenship education programme, which is now taught by a small team of specialist teachers. An extensive programme of enrichment activities expands students' experiences and there is an emphasis on developing more opportunities for students to be able to engage in enterprise activities. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities with particularly good participation in sport

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care for all students is strong, and has recently been reorganised to make it even stronger. Tutor groups now have students from across the age range in order to strengthen links between them. While the system is at an early stage, it is proving to be popular and is promoting even more positive relationships between students. The range of extra provision for students with additional needs is outstanding. Specialist staff give these students closely targeted, personalised and very effective support, working closely with outside agencies where appropriate. Action to promote attendance and to deal with misbehaviour is having a positive impact, with referrals for the latter reducing. Arrangements for safeguarding students meet requirements. Students receive effective guidance at key times of transition. The collection and analysis of information about students' progress is strong at senior level with effective strategic use made of the information. Involvement in this process has been extended to middle leaders and teachers and this is sharpening their understanding of what steps to take to improve it further. However, this work is at relatively early stages and the information is not yet used fully to promote students' progress. Students find their targets helpful, but are not always well enough informed about how to meet them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

This is a tightly run school. Effective strategies for gathering the views of different groups, including parents and students, help to give senior leaders an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could do even better. The determination to improve students' experience and success is seen in the way this is translated into clear priorities, challenging targets and detailed plans for action. The headteacher provides strong direction. Staff and leaders are held accountable for their practice but are also well supported. The outcomes of regular monitoring of teaching and learning are used to share good practice and to trigger support where necessary. Some innovative approaches are used to boost improvement, such as the appointment of four associate assistant headteachers who, for a specific time, are leading on key developments. Work is also underway to improve the consistency of middle leadership. While positive, some

of these strategies are in relatively early stages. Leaders and managers make a good contribution to community cohesion both within and beyond the school.

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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	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 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	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

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

As you know, your school was inspected recently. This letter is to inform you about the results of the inspection. However, first I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for talking with us and helping us reach our judgements.

We judged your school to be good. Good teaching and an effective curriculum are enabling you to achieve well. Most lessons have activities that you find interesting and which help you learn. You make good progress and standards have been rising steadily. By the time you are 16, standards reached are in line with the national average.

The pastoral care provided for you is a strength of the school. Although the vertical tutor groups are new, we heard that many of you like them because they are helping you get to know students from other year groups. The range of support provided for those of you who need some extra help is outstanding. The school is enabling you to develop well personally. I was particularly pleased to see how well students from all ethnic heritages get on together. Most of you behave well and attend regularly. You told us you enjoy school and feel safe. You respond to the way the school promotes healthy lifestyles in an excellent manner.

Your school is well led and managed. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are determined to ensure the school provides the best for you, and they are helping other leaders be more effective in their work. How you are progressing is checked very carefully and senior leaders use this information well, such as to decide who needs extra support. However, I think even more use could be made of this information. I would like middle leaders to use it to help you make even better progress and to make sure you achieve equally across all subjects. Also, teachers should use it to ensure tasks given to you in lessons meet your different needs better and you should be given more detailed guidance on how you can reach your targets. I have asked the school to improve these areas of its work.

You can help the leaders and teachers in your school by continuing to work hard and by acting on the advice they give you on how to improve your work.