

Wakefield Kettlethorpe High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108271
Local Authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	324737
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Jarrett 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 (total)	1560
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs A Mitten
Headteacher	Mr T Griffiths
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2005
School address	Kettlethorpe Hall Drive Standbridge Lane Sandal Wakefield West Yorkshire WF2 7EL
Telephone number	01924 303510
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Kettlethorpe High School is a large comprehensive school in Wakefield for pupils aged 11–16. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, while the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are of White British origin although the school has around 5% of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English, mostly pupils of Pakistani heritage. Kettlethorpe is a specialist school for mathematics and computing. It has a Community Learning Centre (CLC) that provides a wide range of courses for the community. The school has received a number of awards including the Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark and Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Kettlethorpe High School has many strengths. However, its overall effectiveness is satisfactory because standards need to be higher in some areas and the quality of teaching is variable.

The school is a very large one but feels much smaller. This is a tribute to all the staff who have created a safe environment in which all pupils feel valued. Relationships are very good and pupils know who to turn to if problems arise. Parents confirm that pupils settle very quickly into the school. Pupils like the school and know that teachers care for them. They are keen to do well and behave responsibly. They feel involved in decision making. The quality of pastoral care provided by the school is good. Staff know pupils well and provision for some of the more vulnerable pupils is especially effective.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are broadly average. Standards are particularly high in certain subjects including design and technology, physical education and art and design. Standards are not as good in some key areas including English and mathematics. The school acknowledges this and has put in place systematic plans to improve achievement in these two subjects. The 2008 results suggest that this is having a positive impact, especially in English.

This variability in standards across subjects largely reflects inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Inspectors observed some high quality teaching during the inspection. Where this was the case, pupils learnt well as a result of lively teaching that challenged them to do well and gave them good opportunities to work independently. The less effective teaching tended to be duller, with slower pace and this led to passive learning by pupils. The school has recognised this variability and provided training for staff, focused particularly on developing more effective uses of assessment. However, the school's own monitoring programme is not yet sharp enough in identifying weaknesses in teaching and its impact on learning.

The headteacher leads the school well and has been effective in sharing responsibility with the senior leadership team. The senior leaders are strongly focused on raising standards and addressing weaknesses in some departmental performance. There is a clear sense of purpose to the work of the school. The governing body is increasingly involved in strategic planning and evaluating impact. The curriculum has improved. The school enjoys the support of the vast majority of its parents, who rate it highly.

The school is a specialist school for mathematics and computing. This has enabled it to make a significant contribution to the local community and feeder primary schools. The CLC is especially well used by parents and others. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and the school is developing its ICT systems well to support staff, pupils and parents. Participation in the two specialist areas is good. However, attainment targets in mathematics have not been met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement, especially in mathematics.
- Extend the quality and consistency of teaching, including the feedback given to learners.
- Improve the effectiveness of measures to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in teaching and its impact on learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

Standards are broadly average overall. Standards have traditionally been above average at the end of Key Stage 3. However, there was a dip in 2007. Early indications are that results improved in 2008, especially in English. Some of the GCSE performance data are above average, indicating good performance in a number of subjects. However, the number of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades (including English and mathematics) is in line with national average.

Achievement across the school is satisfactory. Pupils do well in a number of subjects. GCSE results show particularly good progress in subjects including art and design, sport and physical education, and statistics. However, pupils make less progress in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. There is no evidence of significant differences in achievement between the different groups of pupils in the school. For example, the Pakistani heritage pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other groups. The school is making good use of challenging targets to raise expectations of pupils' achievement generally, although its success in meeting these targets is currently mixed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are a credit to the school, their parents and themselves. During the inspection, their behaviour was very good both in lessons and around school. They were courteous and considerate towards each other, staff and visitors. Relationships are good reflecting genuine respect and tolerance of others. Pupils said that racial intolerance and bullying are rare and when incidents do occur, they are resolved quickly and effectively. Consequently, pupils feel safe in the school. As one pupil said, 'the school makes sure you are happy'.

A large number of pupils participate in the extensive opportunities available in sport and exercise. Pupils have a good awareness of what constitutes a healthy, balanced diet, although this does not always lead to them making healthy choices at snack and meal times. Pupils enjoy their learning and develop their social skills, teamwork and leadership skills well, through, for example, participation in the Junior Sports Leaders Award. Pupils also make a good contribution to the community, being extensively involved in fundraising activities for charity, for instance supporting a school in Belarus. Many older pupils act as mentors, supporting others who are new to the school and helping them to settle quickly.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to understand and celebrate different cultures and to prepare them for living in a multicultural society through effective liaison with local, national and global communities. Pupils learn to empathise and understand their own and others' feelings. This was demonstrated effectively during the inspection through work in expressive arts when pupils gave a moving portrayal of a mining disaster. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their lives beyond school through the development of basic skills and ICT together with the opportunities provided to link with businesses and to develop enterprise skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, there is considerable inconsistency across subjects and this has an impact on pupils' learning. During the inspection, some highly effective practice was observed in subjects including physical education, the performing arts and history. The most effective lessons were lively, varied and enjoyable for pupils, with good pace to learning. Questions were often carefully aimed to challenge individuals. This provoked thoughtful responses giving pupils time to explore ideas thoroughly in discussion and consolidate their understanding. When pupils were given the opportunity to work independently, they responded well and took responsibility for their own learning. This was seen in a physical education lesson where activities were led and evaluated by the pupils themselves, showing a thorough grasp of what they had been taught.

Where learning was less effective, lessons provided too little challenge for pupils, often because assessment had not been used effectively enough to identify the next steps in learning. In these lessons, teachers sometimes dominated lessons, giving pupils too few opportunities to discuss or test out their ideas independently. As a result, pupils became passive learners. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, although teachers' plans do not always address their learning needs clearly enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has developed since the previous inspection. It is broad and balanced and offers a wide range of subjects during and beyond the school day. Since the previous inspection, the choice of academic subjects available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 has widened. More vocational and occupational programmes have been introduced and a set of bespoke and relevant options is provided for the most vulnerable pupils. Effective links with other schools, colleges and local universities contribute additional flexibility which enhances provision for individual pupils. There is good use of early entry to examinations, including GCSE religious education in Year 9 and English in Year 10, as well as more rapid courses in statistics and the performing arts that stretch the highest attaining pupils.

Across Years 7 to 9 younger pupils are offered a broad range of experiences, with additional support for literacy, where required, including after-school study facilities at a local professional rugby league club. A strong personal, social, health and careers education programme, including the citizenship curriculum, contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Visits by pupils and visitors to the school help to develop pupils' understanding of the world of finance and business. The school offers an extensive range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities. This is rightly recognised by both pupils and parents as being a real strength of the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There are good arrangements in place to ensure that all pupils receive effective pastoral support and guidance. Pupils feel, and are, well cared for. The positive relationships mean that pupils feel safe, knowing they can talk to adults who will take their concerns seriously. The zero

tolerance approach to racism and aggression, which pupils understand and support, contributes strongly to their sense of security. There are appropriate arrangements for safeguarding and ensuring their health and safety.

There is an outstanding range of specific and well-targeted support for pupils with additional vulnerabilities. The high quality internal support provided through, for example, the inclusion, mentoring and pupil support unit, the 'Routes' facility for pupils who speak English as an additional language, and the Diamond nurture group for Year 7 pupils, is enhanced by the close involvement of external agencies. Regular attendance and positive behaviour are promoted by a judicious balance of rewards and sanctions. Effective guidance is provided for pupils at key points of transition, such as when they enter the school or are making decisions about what subjects to study in Key Stage 4. There are sound systems for providing academic guidance. Pupils' progress is checked regularly, with extra support provided where there is significant under-achievement. However, use of this information by teachers in their lesson planning is limited. Targets are set for all pupils, but their effectiveness is inconsistent, as is the quality of marking and feedback to pupils on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Teachers, governors and pupils all speak of the positive impact of the current headteacher. He leads the school well, provides a clear sense of direction and has extended team work involving both staff and governors. Leadership is strongly focussed on raising standards further. There is a clear acknowledgement that pupils should do better, especially in English and mathematics. The school has developed effective improvement plans in both areas and this is beginning to have a positive impact in English.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well because of effective self evaluation. There have been improvements in the curriculum and good standards in pupils' personal development have been maintained. There are particular strengths in the school's commitment to effective inclusion and provision for vulnerable pupils. All this, together with the school's recent record in improving standards in English, demonstrates its good capacity to improve still further.

The senior leadership team works well together towards a common purpose. There is good delegation and senior leaders provide effective leadership in identified areas of the school. The governing body is well led and increasingly involved in the management of the school and strategic decisions. Governors know the school well and understand what needs to be improved.

The senior leadership is currently focusing on developing the role of middle leaders, especially their involvement in quality assurance. The procedures are clear, with senior and middle leaders, for example, responsible for a systematic programme of lesson observations, learning 'walks', scrutiny of work and departmental self-evaluation. However, the outcomes of this process are not yet effective enough. Some of the lesson observations have failed to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning or how teachers should improve.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	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	2
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 learners' needs?	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

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	3
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	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

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

Inspection of Wakefield Kettlethorpe High School, Sandal, Wakefield,

WF2 7EL

My colleagues and I very much enjoyed visiting your school on the 1–2 October 2008 and speaking with many of you. You told us that you like school, feel safe and particularly enjoy attending the many clubs and other activities the school provides. Some of you have also taken part in sporting and musical trips abroad. You said that behaviour was good and that teachers deal strongly with any bullying or racist incidents that occur. That was also our view.

We think that your school is giving you a satisfactory education and that it also has some real strengths. The pupils get on well with each other and with the staff. You want to learn and behave well in most lessons and around school. The school provides you with good quality advice and support. You know who to turn to if any problems arise. The school works hard to provide support for those pupils who need it. Inspectors enjoyed meeting some of the Year 7 pupils in the Diamonds group as well as speaking to pupils in the Routes unit.

Standards are broadly average. However, there are big differences between some of the subjects. You make especially good progress in some subjects like PE and art and design. We have asked the school to try to improve standards in other subjects including mathematics. The school is already working on this and last year's results appear to be better.

We saw some very good lessons where pupils were fully involved and enjoyed learning. We have spoken to the headteacher and other senior staff about some ways in which lessons can be improved so that you will learn better and how they can make sure that you are always getting the most from lessons. Some pupils, as well as other teachers and parents, told us that the headteacher had helped the school to improve. He and his senior colleagues are committed to raising standards still further. They have already improved the curriculum and give you more choices in Years 10 and 11. Many of your parents completed questionnaires which they sent to me. This showed that they supported the school very strongly. We are confident that the headteacher and his colleagues will be able to improve the school even more.