

# Vermuyden School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118064
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Riding of Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326754
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Bennetts

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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	1021
Sixth form	106
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Lewis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Danuta Tomasz
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Centenary Road Goole DN14 6AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01405 768621
<b>Fax number</b>	01405 768277

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Vermuyden is a mixed comprehensive school which has specialist Mathematics and Computing Status. It serves the town of Goole in the East Riding of Yorkshire. It is situated in an area of social and economic deprivation. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average; so too is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The great majority of students are of White British heritage. A small proportion of students have joined the school in recent years from Central Europe; some continue to learn English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Vermuyden School provides a good education. The school is improving rapidly. There has been strong and successful action over the last year to improve students' attitudes and behaviour. The curriculum has been improved. Students are well cared for. With the appointment of the present headteacher a year ago, a range of well conceived initiatives has been introduced. The school is well placed to build on recent development and improve further. The partly completed rebuilding project is a contributory factor to rising morale.

Standards are average and achievement is good. Students have below average standards at age 11. In the main, they make satisfactory progress to age 14. Students' achievement by age 16 is good. About two thirds of students achieve the equivalent of 5 A\* to C GCSE passes, which is above the national figure. In 2008, the proportion achieving this standard, inclusive of English and mathematics, was significantly lower than the national average. There is clear evidence of strong improvement in this measure with the present Year 11. The school is taking firmer action to identify and tackle potential underachievement. Achievement in the sixth form is satisfactory.

Student's personal development is satisfactory. Students are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles and to adopt safe practices and they make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. In most basic skills, they are well prepared for ongoing education and work, though the skills of independent learning are not always well refined: overall preparation for the next stages is satisfactory. Behaviour has improved greatly over recent terms. It is now satisfactory. Attendance is unacceptably low, with too many persistent poor attenders. However, the school is firm in tackling this and there has been recent improvement. Most pupils enjoy their education. Punctuality is improving but remains a concern.

Teaching and learning have improved and are now good. However, there remains scope for further improvement and the school is identifying the diverse ways in which individual teachers' work could be improved. Students are provided with a good curriculum that meets their needs well. The school's Mathematics and Computing Specialism has led to close collaboration with local businesses. It has driven the curricular development which is highly responsive to local circumstances. The school makes effective provision for their care, guidance and support.

The school is led with vigour and determination. Many beneficial changes have been put in hand over the last few terms. Necessary improvements have been prioritised and tackled with rigour. Leaders have a clear view as to how to take improvement forward. The school is well supported by the governing body in this endeavour.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the small sixth form is satisfactory. Many students have few GCSE passes at the higher grades. Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory in view of the below average standards on entry. The numbers studying each subject are low and results vary considerably from year to year. The great majority of students stay the course and the school has effective systems in place to support students who find the change to A-level difficult. Teaching is good. However, progress is limited by students' below average starting points and under-developed independent learning skills.

Students are generally well motivated and appreciate the efforts made to support their academic and personal development. They enjoy their time in the sixth form and attend regularly. Their personal development is good. Students appreciate and enjoy the opportunities provided to work with younger pupils. There are new systems to track progress and identify and deal with under-achievement, but it is too early to judge their impact. The curriculum is satisfactory. Until recently provision comprised mainly traditional academic A-level courses. This has now been supplemented by a few vocational subjects to meet students' needs more effectively. This provision is being expanded. The school works well with other providers, particularly the school with which it shares the sixth form partnership. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Recent changes in the sixth form leader's responsibilities have resulted in more effective self-evaluation and day to day management, but have not yet impacted on standards and achievement.

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

- Raise standards in Key Stage 3.
- Raise standards in the sixth form and ensure that new systems for dealing with potential underachievement are always effective.
- Identify ways in which individual teachers' work could be improved and provide guidance accordingly.
- Improve attendance and punctuality.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

By age 16, standards are average and achievement is good. Students make better progress in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. When students join the school at age 11, the standards they have reached are generally a term or two behind the average for that age. In national assessments at age 14 in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, students have often been about a year behind average standards nationally. However, in 2008 results in mathematics were close to what would usually be expected from students' starting points when they joined the school. Many students in the 11 to 14 age group struggle with literacy and the school is now making appropriate modifications to the curriculum to support them.

At age 16, about two thirds of the students achieved the equivalent of five GCSE passes at grade C or above in 2007 and 2008, slightly higher than the national figure. This reflects success in a number of vocational subjects. This standard inclusive of English and mathematics was achieved by only 26% of students in 2008, a slip from 41% in the previous year. Results were particularly disappointing in English. Weak outcomes on this measure were partly due to lack of rigour in systems for tracking students' progress. The present Year 11 students have already taken their GCSE mathematics examinations. There is clear evidence of greatly improved standards in English. Achievement with regard to combined performance in English and mathematics is now strong. In lessons throughout the main school, progress is mostly good, though in many cases there is scope for a little more challenge or for better attention to things some students have not grasped. Occasionally, the attitudes of a minority of students limit progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do as well as others and they are well supported.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. They generally feel safe and secure in school. They are confident that adults support them when they feel vulnerable. Most students know how to stay healthy, making sensible choices about eating and taking exercise. A good proportion of them take part in extra sporting activity.

A large majority of students say they enjoy school and have positive attitudes towards their work. Behaviour is satisfactory and most behave well. However, low level disruption in a small minority of lessons disturbs the learning of others, particularly in Key Stage 4. Effective support for individual students who struggle to behave well has greatly reduced the number of exclusions this year.

Attendance is improving from year-to-year but remains low, especially for older students. The school is aware of the need to tackle absence caused by students taking holidays in term time. The proportion of students with a poor record of attendance is falling. Punctuality is improving but remains a concern.

Students make a good contribution to the community. Various student bodies have influence and bring about improvements. For example, the student leadership group helped shape improvements in movement around narrow corridors, with a one way system and a greater staff presence. Students contribute to local and national charities. They develop an understanding of the cultures of those who have recently moved into the town from other European countries. Links with schools in Sri Lanka and Africa help broaden their perspective on the lives of others.

In the main, students are suitably prepared for their futures. Through work experience and other activities, they understand the attributes required for the workplace. Levels of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory, but many are not yet independent learners.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, although there are inconsistencies in teaching quality. It is most effective in Key Stage 4, where students make good progress in most subjects. Relationships between most staff and students are positive so that students develop confidence in themselves and their ability to learn.

Most lessons are well planned with clear structure and purpose, and students know what is expected. Many lessons include a good range of challenging activities that interest students and learning proceeds with pace. Electronic whiteboards and computers are often used effectively.

Occasionally, teachers talk too much and students' interest wanes. Although many teachers make good use of assessment information to plan tasks which match students' different needs, more able students are sometimes insufficiently challenged. Occasionally, expectations are not high enough, activities do not engage students and the pace is too slow. On other occasions, teachers do not realise that some students have not picked up key points, or are struggling

because tasks are too demanding. In a few lessons, learning is disrupted by unacceptable behaviour.

The quality of marking is variable within and between subjects. There are many examples of very helpful marking which help students understand how well they are doing and how to improve. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are well supported by teaching assistants and teachers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. It has benefited from the school's specialist Mathematics and Computing status which has helped to drive curriculum development. It provides many and varied opportunities for students to achieve a wide range of qualifications and develop personal skills. Designed carefully around individual need and capability, it offers academic, vocational and work based routes to learning. Where appropriate, there are effective links with the further education college.

At Key Stage 3, there is an innovative curriculum starting in Year 7, where themes of learning are woven across humanities subjects. A principal focus is the development of personal skills including creativity, problem solving, team work and the development of literacy. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned for all year groups. It contributes effectively to students' developing understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

Many students enjoy a very wide variety of activities and study support groups which enrich and broaden their learning beyond lessons. These range from learning new languages, drama and music to ICT and sports. The school constantly seeks opportunities for new activities to ensure that there is 'something for everyone'.

Utilising facilities and expertise developed through the specialism, the school has provided both training and technical support not only within school, but also to local primary schools. A major thrust of this work is to develop the effective use of new technologies to enhance the curriculum and engage learners. The school is proactive in provision of learning opportunities for the wider community of Goole.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good and are leading to improving progress and personal development. The required arrangements for safeguarding students, including child protection and health and safety are in place. Well organised pastoral care, and support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very effective. Staff work effectively as a team to cater for all students, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Students' attendance, punctuality, behaviour, attitudes and academic progress are monitored rigorously. Poor attendance is being tackled with some success although it is still not good enough. Overall, decisive and effective action is taken, which supports students and leads to their improving personal development and progress.

The school goes to great lengths to help students overcome difficulties in their lives which are a barrier to learning. An effective network of support is available to students through the pastoral system, learning mentors, teaching assistants, counsellors and other staff dedicated

to pupils' well-being. The most vulnerable students are particularly well supported. Many appreciate the help they have received that has improved their attendance and maintained their interest in education and their futures.

The school has introduced a more rigorous system for recording teachers' assessment of students' attitudes and progress in order to identify underachievement. Staff are aware of the need to ensure the reliability of assessment that is recorded on the system.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The present headteacher joined the school in January 2008. Since then, there has been effective restructuring of staff teams and prudent innovation. There is now a vigorous and resolute drive for improvement that carries the full support of staff and the governing body. Firm action has been taken to tackle inappropriate behaviour by a regime of reasonable and effective sanctions and rewards. Poor attendance is being dealt with and shows some improvement. The school's strong systems to promote students' welfare have been reinforced. Community cohesion is good. Students of all abilities and backgrounds, including those who have come to England fairly recently, are well supported. There are good initiatives to strengthen the community within the school, and to serve the community and facilitate development in the local area. Through the curriculum, assemblies and occasional events, students gain an appreciation of the variety of faiths, cultures and life styles across Britain and beyond. Adjustments have been made to the curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 to cater more effectively for students' needs and aspirations. Teaching and learning are now good, though senior leaders are aware that there is scope for further improvement.

The great majority of students are positive about the school and acknowledge recent change for the better. There are clear targets for improvement in standards and all aspects of the school's work. Senior staff are realistic about how things stand. They apply their energies and deploy the school's resources wisely. Governors are painstaking and diligent in their support of the school, and lend power to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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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	16-19
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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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

## Achievement and standards

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

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	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	3	
The attendance of learners	4	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	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**

23 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Vermuyden School, East Riding of Yorkshire, DN14 6AN

Thank you for your warm welcome and for talking to the Ofsted team with honesty and confidence about your school.

We think that your school is a good one. As a result of good teaching and learning and an improvement in behaviour, standards are improving. By Year 11, achievement is good. The range of courses available in main school is good and there are some good additional activities. The staff do their best to help those students who need support and guidance. You are well looked after. Attitudes and behaviour have improved greatly over the last few terms. We consider that the great majority of you have sound personal skills and that you know how to take care of yourselves and one another. In the sixth form, teaching is generally good, and results show satisfactory achievement, but sometimes students could do a little more to help themselves in organising their learning.

The school is well run. A lot of improvements have been made over the last year or so. Attendance is still poor, but not as bad as it used to be. Behaviour is much better and far fewer students are being excluded from school.

We have asked the school to give attention to three things. Standards should be improved further, particularly in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form, and the new systems for checking up on progress need to ensure that all students are doing well. Whilst teaching and learning are generally good, some lessons could be better; the school needs to find out what could be improved in different classrooms and put improvement in hand. And, obviously, attendance needs to be improved further.

With much of this, you could help – for instance, by giving your best efforts with school work, and by some of you getting into a better routine of being at school every day. This is a good and improving school. The new buildings are helping to improve morale. Your new headteacher aims to make Vermuyden an outstanding school. To achieve that ambitious aim, all must pull together and do their best. We wish you every success in the future and look forward to Vermuyden School going from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Lead inspector