

Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119721
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327117
Inspection date	20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Alan Brine 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)	950
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Malcolm Binns
Headteacher	Mr Paul Trickett
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
School address	Haworth Street Oswaldtwistle Accrington Lancashire BB5 3EA
Telephone number	01254 231051
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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. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the achievement of the students across the school
- the arrangements for monitoring the provision and identifying improvement priorities and actions, including the changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum
- the effectiveness of the systems for academic monitoring
- how effectively the school is working to improve attendance.

Evidence was gathered from school documents and data, interviews with the chair of governors, the school's improvement partner, students and staff, observations of the school at work and the responses of a questionnaire to parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive in

Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire. It is average in size with around 950 students. Most come from the immediate localities which include some areas with significant levels of social disadvantage. The number of students entitled to free school meals is much higher than the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is also above average. Nearly half the students have been identified as having special educational needs, well above average. The number with statements of special educational needs is also above average. The school achieved specialist status in business and enterprise in September 2005. It is designated as an Extended School, has Investors in People status and is currently awaiting confirmation of a 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: 2

Rhyddings provides its students with a good education which includes a number of outstanding features. The school's success is grounded in its strong ethos and values. These are reflected in its commitment to working closely with its partners to secure high achievement, to promote excellence in the students' personal development, and to develop strong community links. As one parent wrote, our children 'found Rhyddings an enjoyable experience and, as a result, are developing into mature knowledgeable adults'.

Achievement across the school is good although there is some variation within the overall picture. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE is above the national average. This is a significant success given that most arrive in Year 7 with below average prior attainment and reflects the outstanding Key Stage 4 curriculum built on the school's status as a business and enterprise college. The number of students achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics has now risen above the Government's key target of 30% but is still below the national average. However, the school can confidently predict this will rise significantly in 2009 as a result of actions taken to support students' progress. Standards at Key Stage 3 in the core subjects are below average. While there was some improvement in 2008 notably in English, progress at Key Stage 3 is slower than that at Key Stage 4. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and those for whom English is an additional language are particularly well supported.

As at the time of the previous inspection, the personal development and well-being of the students is outstanding and reflects the excellent arrangements for care, guidance and support. As a result of the strong emphasis on developing students' social skills, they develop into confident and mature individuals. Relationships in the school, including those between different ethnic groups, are very positive. Students make a strong contribution to the life of the school and the wider community reflecting the excellent, carefully planned provision to promote community cohesion. The school's work in promoting race equality and tackling discrimination at all levels is also outstanding.

While a small number of parents raised concerns about behaviour, inspectors found that students take responsibility for their actions and the school has effective arrangements for dealing promptly with the less appropriate behaviour of a small minority. The school has also taken firm and successful action to improve attendance although levels of absence are still above the national average. Most students enjoy school and have a very clear understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and following safe practices. Bullying is rare. Through the business and enterprise culture of the school, students develop positive workplace skills and, as a result, a high proportion enters further education, training or employment. The school is working hard to address the weaknesses that many students have with basic literacy and numeracy skills.

All statutory obligations in relation to safeguarding are met. A strength of the school is the highly effective use made of extended services to support vulnerable students, a reflection of the Rhyddings wider success as an extended school provider. There are very effective arrangements to monitor students' academic progress, particularly at Key Stage 4, addressing an issue raised at the time of the previous inspection. Good use is made of learning mentors and other strategies to support those in danger of under achieving.

The inspectors agree with the school that the quality of teaching is good. In the best lessons teachers communicate real enthusiasm for their subject. They engage students very effectively, encouraging them to take responsibility in their learning and develop skills of working independently and collaboratively. Occasionally, where learning is less effective, there is not enough challenge to ensure all students make good progress.

The excellent Key Stage 4 curriculum offers students a wide range of courses which are very well matched to their individual needs and interests. This is a key to the successful GCSE results. Initiatives are in place to improve the Key Stage 3 curriculum to ensure it enables students to develop better learning skills and improve their literacy. It is too early to judge the impact of the changes and the school is aware it needs to monitor them carefully. The range of extra-curricular opportunities provided is excellent, wide-ranging and inclusive.

The leadership and management of the school are good. It has recently undergone significant changes in the senior leadership team. The newly appointed headteacher, who was previously a deputy at the school, is providing good continuity with the previous leadership and has established a clear and well considered strategic vision for the next stage of development. This vision is focused strongly on further embedding the school's values through an emphasis on promoting more personalised learning in order to meet the needs of all students even more effectively. The plans extend to a review of the roles and responsibilities of the leadership team and this will provide opportunities to promote further the effectiveness of the middle leaders in the school. The school sets challenging targets which underpin the high expectations of success. The arrangements for monitoring the performance of the school are very good and the quality of development planning is excellent, underpinning the school's good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

The governors carry out their role well and are good at holding the school to account for its performance. They are aware of the need to recruit wider representation from the minority ethnic communities on the Governing Body.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in Key Stage 3, particularly in the core subjects.
- Monitor the impact of the initiatives designed to improve the Key Stage 3 curriculum carefully and take action as appropriate.

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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?	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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	1

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	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

21 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Rhyddings Business and Enterprise School, Lancashire,

BB5 3EA

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking with many of you. We also read carefully the questionnaires completed by your parents. These were very helpful to us.

Rhyddings is a good school and we agree with those of you we met who told us that some aspects are outstanding. The governors, headteacher and all the staff are committed to your success both in terms of examination results and supporting your wider personal development into mature adults.

We were particularly impressed by the positive atmosphere in the school and the very good relationships between all groups of students, particularly those between different ethnic groups. You make a very positive contribution to this success through your attitudes, good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. Attendance at the school is improving but it is still below average and some of you could help by making sure you keep your absence to a minimum.

In thinking about the successes of your school we picked out a number of other important things. The courses available to you at Key Stage 4 are impressive and match well with your interests and ambitions for the future. This is a key reason why the school's overall results at Key Stage 4 are now above the national average – a real success story. The school has very strong links with the wider community and this helps you to be part of the drive to promote positive harmony in the local area. The school works really well with others to support those of you who find school a challenge or who have English as an additional language.

The new headteacher is bringing a fresh set of ideas for the future to make sure the school continues to improve and the needs of all students are met as well as possible. Some of the changes in Year 7 reflect this drive to do even better. We have asked the school to make sure the progress of all students at Key Stage 3 is good and to look carefully at the changes being made in Year 7 to ensure they are a success.

Thank you again for welcoming us to your school. We wish you well in the future.

Alan Brine

Her Majesty's Inspector