

Selby High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121702
Local Authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	327553
Inspection dates	4–5 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Bowles 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)	972
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Gibson
Headteacher	Mr P Eckersley
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2006
School address	Leeds Road Selby North Yorkshire YO8 4HT
Telephone number	01757 703327
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Age group	11–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors, with a further inspector in a shadowing role.

Description of the school

Selby High is an average-sized and growing specialist arts school enrolling students from the town of Selby and some outlying villages. Students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of students receiving free school meals is broadly average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average, as is the number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of students from a minority ethnic background is small as is the number of students for whom English is not their first language. The school has several awards recognising the quality of its provision, including The National Healthy Schools standard, The Youth Chartermark and Artsmark Silver. It has recently added an award for Inclusion, a Leading Aspect Award for Community Cohesion via the Arts and an award for educational visits.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has some significant strengths, notably the good care and support for its students, which parents strongly appreciate. The curriculum is good because it offers something for everyone and has an excellent range of interesting extra opportunities, which greatly contribute to students' confidence and enjoyment. The school is developing well its arts college status, which maintains a high profile and makes a strong contribution to students' personal development. That specialism is beginning to have a positive effect on the wider school. Artistic enterprise plays a key part in developing outstanding partnerships in the interests of students and the wider community.

The quality of teaching and learning in the school is mixed and, as a result, students' progress in learning is variable. There are significant differences between the standards reached in different subjects. For example, standards are much higher in science than in mathematics. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall and has generally improved over the past two years, but with exceptions, including mathematics. While there is some good teaching, in the less successful lessons teachers do not make effective use of the information about students' attainment in order to plan activities that will ensure they all make progress. The school's self-evaluation identifies priorities accurately and plans for improvement are clear. Governors are well informed, supportive and increasingly effective in challenging progress towards priorities. Improvements are evident, although the pace is being hampered by recruitment difficulties. The school has made headway on the three issues raised at the last inspection and shows satisfactory capacity to improve further. It has done notably well in improving the achievement of higher attainers. Middle leaders are now focussed on raising the achievement of all learners, although monitoring and evaluation are not consistently effective. There has been an audit of provision for citizenship, but more needs to be done to develop it across the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics to match those in science.
- Ensure consistency in the use of information about students' attainment to inform the planning of lessons, so they better target individual learning.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged 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

Students start at Selby High with broadly average standards. By the age of 14, students reach standards in national test that are average overall, and above average in science. By the time they leave at 16, students' examination performance is broadly average overall, but this includes some significant variation: for example, standards are above average in science, average in English, but well below average in mathematics. The school has acted effectively to raise achievement following a dip by identifying and tackling areas of weak performance. Given their starting points, all students make satisfactory progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and boys make generally good progress, as do students with high prior attainment. Provisional results show that the proportion of students who gained at least five good grades at GCSE was average in 2008. In recent years, most of the school's challenging specialist targets

for arts subjects have been met. Science is a consistent strength, and the percentage of students who gain two or more good grades in science is well above average. History, childcare and business studies have also performed well. However, weaker performance in mathematics, and to a lesser extent English, has meant the number of students who attain five good GCSE grades including these subjects has been below average. The school has taken firm action in this area and has secured a more settled and effective teaching team, though some vacancies remain. Its regular tracking indicates that students are currently making at least adequate progress in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are strengths of the school. They say they feel safe and valued as individuals. They insist that bullying is rare, but when it does occur, is dealt with swiftly and effectively. The emphasis the school places on trust, respect and personal responsibility is taken up well by students who are enthusiastically involved in a wide range of charitable and community events. Students' involvement in a good range of activities raises their awareness of the world of work and their social accountability, ensuring that they are, in this respect, well prepared for life after school. Specialist status has had a significant impact on students' confidence and enjoyment through a wide range of arts courses and enrichment activities. For some, this had begun as early as Year 4, when they first started arts workshops. Concerts are regularly performed and students have worked with professional artists. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In their reflective response to assemblies and in their discussion of issues, the majority of students show a good sense of right and wrong. They relate well to each other, particularly within their mixed-age form groups. The very effective school council takes a full and active role in making the views of the student population heard, and students feel they have influenced the school for the better. Students are well informed about the importance of healthy eating and have plenty of opportunities for exercise. They enjoy coming to school and work well together. This shows in their good behaviour and smiling faces. The school is a harmonious community, where students know the school has their welfare at its heart. Attendance is broadly in line with the average for similar schools and levels of persistent absence are below average. The school works hard to raise students' and parents' awareness of the positive impact good attendance has on progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst some successful and effective practice was seen, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In lessons that use lively approaches and well tailored activities to develop critical thinking, students achieve their targets. In addition, their progress is carefully monitored, any dips in progress are investigated and strategies are thoughtfully planned to support student learning. Many lessons are planned with clear learning objectives which help students understand how to achieve well, but a significant proportion are not. In these lessons, teachers fail to adapt tasks well enough to ensure all students' needs and interests are met. Some good classroom support is provided to ensure that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not miss out and make good progress towards achieving their targets. Where learning is less effectively planned, expectations of student behaviour and what they can achieve fall short of establishing a positive climate for learning in which all can achieve

consistently well. Students are aware of their targets, but teachers' marking of their work is inconsistent and does not focus enough on identifying what steps students need to take to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall and contributes well to students' personal development. It ensures that they are suitably prepared for future work and training through an extensive programme of enterprise programmes that develop their teamwork and independent learning skills. A very broad range of options at Key Stage 4, together with a developing range of pathways at Key Stage 3, ensures that it very closely matches students' needs. Working closely with other organisations, a wide range of vocational courses is offered at Key Stage 4, including work-based courses that improve students' employability skills. The curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis in order to respond to national and local requirements. There has been some improvement in citizenship provision, but this currently lacks a strategic plan to promote further development.

Specialist arts status has significantly enhanced the curriculum by enabling the school to provide a wider range of courses supported by theatre and dance companies and other arts organisations. Students benefit from taking part in an excellent range of enrichment activities, including visits linked to subject areas, and many sports and arts productions, together with a developing programme of support for the gifted and talented.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes its responsibilities for safeguarding students very seriously. The current government requirements are met. Parents recognise this and many express their satisfaction with the actions the school takes to look after their children. Extremely positive relationships between adults and students exist throughout the school and they know each other very well. The school underpins this personal knowledge with an excellent system for monitoring the effect of interventions made to support students' well-being. A very strong atmosphere of trust and respect has been created. Coupled with the high priority for treating each student as an individual, this ensures that support is directed quickly and sensitively to where it is needed. Links with outside professional and other agencies are used well to support the work of the school. Students say the school, 'really looks after us' and that, 'It's just the way things are.' This helps to build confidence and openness, and contributes well to the happy environment within the school. The rewards system is successful because it is relevant and meaningful and motivates students of all ages. The school has a reliable system for monitoring the progress students make. The information produced is used well to support the mentoring of students in Years 10 and 11, but not as well across the whole school to challenge all students in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the leadership team have an effective and growing impact on the development of the school. They have a significant positive influence on building aspirations

and positive attitudes, so that increasingly students 'can because they believe they can'. Parents are strongly impressed by the school's leadership, noting the improved facilities, the wide range of opportunities offered, and the effect the school has on students' self confidence. It is an inclusive school which has been successful in improving the progress made by different groups of students, such as those who receive free school meals.

Senior leaders have acted effectively to bring about a steady improvement in academic achievement. The school currently gives satisfactory value for money. Performance management holds staff to account and reflects the school's challenging expectations. Lessons are regularly monitored and areas for improvement are identified. In the best cases, evaluation is rigorous and indicates clearly what has contributed to students' progress, but the evidence of impact is patchy. Professional development, including coaching from consultants, is suitably focussed, but difficulties in securing sufficient specialist staff are hampering improvement in some subjects. Leaders are using imaginative approaches, such as a recruitment fair, to resolve this, and deploy staff effectively. Governors are well informed and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously, visiting the school to see it at work.

There is good leadership of the specialism and, increasingly, arts subjects are supporting other departments to adopt a wider range of teaching approaches through the development of resources. Through its arts specialism, the school has made a good start on promoting community cohesion by reaching out to groups of newcomers: for example, it has run arts workshops for Polish workers and Polish music sessions for school students. Specialist status has enabled the school to support primary partner schools with valuable training opportunities for teachers and improved transition links for students. Additionally, the school's involvement in a local network of specialist schools has led to curriculum support for secondary school partners.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
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**

Thank you for your warm welcome when inspectors visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to meet you and I would especially like to thank all who took the time to help us or to explain what the school does for you. We were impressed by your confidence and the pride you have in your school. I am writing to let you know our findings.

The school is satisfactory overall. It has good features, including your personal development as healthy, confident and caring young people. This is mainly due to the good support and care the staff give you. We can see how you feel listened to and given responsibility for making your community better. You have a good choice of courses in Years 10 and 11 and exciting opportunities to develop your interests and talents. These are helping more of you to enjoy your education and achieve success. Added to this, anyone who slips behind is noticed and helped. As a result, performance in GCSE examinations has steadily improved and is now nearly, but not quite, good overall. Some subjects, including science and the arts, do well, but there has been weak performance in others, most significantly, mathematics. As you told us, some lessons really help you to make rapid progress. Yet some others are not well enough planned to make sure that everybody in the class makes good progress. The school's leaders have moved the school forwards in many ways. They understand the priorities for the future and are working hard on them. We have asked them to:

- raise standards and achievement in mathematics to the levels in science
- make sure that all lessons are carefully planned to move every student on from what they can already do.

I believe that you will want to play your part in this, by showing 'Selby Star' quality effort in every lesson.

With best wishes for the future.