

Spen Valley Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107778
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	336950
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Lowery 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 of pupils on the school roll	889
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Maxine Dunn
Headteacher	Mr Toby Eastaugh
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 27 lessons and four tutorials; 29 teachers were seen; meetings were held with groups of students, the Vice Chair of governors, and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at information on students' attainment, tracking data, samples of students' work, the school development plan, and policies and procedures. One inspector focused on arrangements to safeguard students. The inspection took into account questionnaire responses from students, staff and from 55 parents and carers. During the inspection students from Years 7 to 10 were present.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment, in particular in English and mathematics
- whether teaching was good enough to ensure that all students, in particular the less able, made sufficiently rapid progress
- whether leaders at all levels were consistently monitoring and reviewing their work in order to drive up standards
- the contribution of the sports specialism.

Information about the school

Spen Valley Sports College is an average-sized comprehensive school situated in Liversedge, which is located between Dewsbury and Huddersfield. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have a statement of special educational needs exceeds the national average. The small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds are predominately of Pakistani heritage. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. The school holds a number of awards including Investors in People and an International School award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Students are well supported and benefit from an increasingly personalised curriculum. The headteacher places a clear emphasis on raising attainment and this is now having an impact on improving students' achievement. The sports specialism has been particularly effective in motivating students and giving them the opportunity to achieve in sporting competition and to secure vocational accreditation. Standards in English and, in particular, mathematics are starting to rise as a result of increasingly effective teaching. However, students' attainment in these core subjects remains below average.

A significant minority of students have low standards of literacy when they start in Year 7. Careful scrutiny of students' needs coupled with particularly effective intervention work is addressing this weakness in literacy, in particular in improving standards of reading. Staff work hard to remove the barriers to learning and, consequently, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. At the end of Key Stage 4 students' attainment overall is broadly in line with the national average.

Students reported they felt safe in school and almost all parents and carers confirmed this view. Effective steps have been taken to improve attendance which is now broadly average. Students behave well around school, but on occasions in lessons a small minority do not engage with their studies and their learning slows. The school recognises the importance of high quality teaching and is placing significant emphasis on developing good quality training and coaching programmes. However, in a minority of lessons work is not sufficiently challenging. As a result, some students do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Significant changes to the curriculum are supporting the rise in attainment. An increasing proportion of students are gaining higher-level accreditation through the practical BTEC courses. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities. Participation rates in sporting activities are high, which underpins students' good understanding and development of a healthy lifestyle.

Arrangements for the care, guidance and support of students are a significant strength. Students particularly welcome the help received from the specialist team of pastoral staff. One parent reported on the 'excellent support offered' to her son and how 'lines of communication between the school and home were of a very good standard'. Good transition support is provided as students join the school, choose their courses and move on after Year 11 to further study, training or employment.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have established a clear vision for the school and this is reflected in a well-structured development plan. Effective systems are

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in place to ensure smooth day-to-day management and to secure further improvement for the school. As a result, there is a calm and orderly environment. The leadership team has over the last two years been successful in driving through changes to staffing, teaching and the curriculum in order to raise standards. However, many of these strategies have yet to be fully embedded and secure sustained improvement. Consequently, the school is judged to have a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - prioritising the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
 - raising teachers' expectations of what students can understand and achieve.
- Increase the proportion of good and better lessons by ensuring that:
 - they seek to interest and challenge students
 - work is accurately matched to the needs of all students
 - students are engaged in their learning
 - marking clearly indicates how students can improve their work.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons students are well behaved and have good relationships with staff. They respond positively to good teaching and enjoy practical learning. On BTEC programmes, in particular those focused on sport and the arts, students appreciate the relevance of courses and demonstrate good independent learning skills. Achievement is higher where students enjoy their learning. Specialist status makes a significant contribution to recent improvements in outcomes. Weaker literacy and numeracy skills impede progress in the traditional core areas of English and mathematics. This has resulted in below average results in these GCSEs. The position is now improving; students are making average progress in English and more secure progress in mathematics. Pass rates in the functional literacy and numeracy tests rose significantly in 2009.

Good arrangements for staff supervision encourage students to move around the school sensibly. Behaviour is satisfactory; in lessons it frequently reflects the quality of the teaching, although in too many lessons students are passive learners. The new behaviour management system is increasingly effective; detention and exclusion rates are falling. Students demonstrate good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are keen to take on responsibilities, for example student ambassadors visit primary schools assisting Year 6 pupils to prepare for their move up to the college. Attendance rates have improved during the current academic year and are now satisfactory.

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Enterprise, decision-making and team-building skills are nurtured during the popular annual Challenge Week. However, weaknesses in basic skills limit some students' future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

While almost all lessons seen by inspectors were at least satisfactory, only a minority were judged to be good or outstanding. Here teaching was exciting, engaged all students and provided clear challenge for the more able. Where teaching was less effective, lessons tended to be planned for, and delivered to, the whole class. Here some students reported they found the work too easy and the pace too slow. Students respond best to practical challenges in well-managed classes. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide effective support for those students whose circumstances make them vulnerable; an emphasis is placed on the development of social and emotional skills which supports these students to make good progress.

Thoughtful and well-planned curriculum development has significantly improved the range of opportunities offered. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been carefully reviewed

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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and revised in order to motivate students and develop their basic skills. In one outstanding humanities lesson Year 7 students were making thoughtful contributions to a discussion on the environment linked to an environmental survey which had fired their imagination and skills of enquiry. Early entry successfully allows students with a strong sporting or artistic aptitude to gain early accreditation. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers an appropriate balance between traditional and vocational courses. Programmes are increasingly personalised to meet individuals' needs and aptitudes. Arrangements with neighbouring schools offer further access to specialist GCSE and vocational courses. The sports specialism is a key driver of improvement, leading developments in teaching and learning, together with offering a vibrant range of courses and successfully promoting health awareness.

Well established systems for care, guidance and support are effective in assisting students' learning. A strong team of pastoral officers is increasingly establishing good links with parents and carers, improving attendance and working closely with students whose circumstances make them vulnerable. The Oasis Centre, predominately targeting those at risk during Key Stage 3, is particularly effective in assisting students' social and emotional learning. Tutors' sessions are well planned and are increasingly developing more reflective and confident students. Effective tracking systems enable staff to ensure that students are clear about their progress. However, too many students are still unclear exactly what steps are needed to secure improvements and meet their targets.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>2</p>

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are committed to improving the school and increasingly their work is driving up standards across the school. Whole-school and individual students' targets are now challenging. Senior staff and members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's strength and weaknesses. Development planning is carefully focused on targeting resources in order to secure improvements. However, members of the governing body do not yet systematically involve parents and carers in the school's planning and review processes. Effective systems are in place to report to parents and carers on their children's progress. Systems to ensure the safeguarding of students and the safe recruitment of staff are good. Appropriate training takes place to ensure effective procedures for child protection. Teaching is systematically monitored and instances of particularly weak practice have been rigorously challenged. Leaders

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place a clear emphasis on making good staff appointments. They have now addressed gaps in staffing in the key subjects, which have until recently had a negative impact on attainment. Leaders are effective in the promotion of equality and the tackling of discrimination. Strong links with a school in Ghana have resulted in teachers' exchanges, students' visits, shared curricular projects and regular communications between pen-pals. This is assisting students to develop a good appreciation of cultural diversity. Effective plans are in place to promote community cohesion within the school and the local community. A comprehensive survey of students' and staff's religious beliefs is helping the school to strengthen its curriculum in order to promote tolerance and global understanding. Effective systems are in place for financial planning and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

While the number of questionnaires returned during the inspection was comparatively small, most parents and carers who responded are happy about their children's education. A few expressed concerns about the progress their children were making and indicated they would welcome more support in assisting learning at home. Inspectors found that while progress was overall satisfactory, a small minority of students do make slower progress in their studies. The school is aware of the request from some parents and carers to help them better support their children's learning and it has included proposals to address this in the school development plan.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Spen Valley Sports College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 889 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	36	33	60	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	38	29	53	2	4	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	22	40	29	53	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	35	28	51	8	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	33	29	53	8	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	29	27	49	8	15	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	27	33	60	6	11	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	17	31	34	62	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	31	30	55	5	9	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	20	31	56	7	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	16	32	58	7	13	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	16	29	29	53	6	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	45	23	42	5	9	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Spen Valley Sports College, Liversedge, WF15 7LX

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and taking the time to show us your work and talk to us during our recent inspection. We judged your school to be providing you with a satisfactory and improving education. You told us through your questionnaires and in discussions how you welcome the support and care received from staff, in particular from members of the pastoral team. Older students appreciate the range of options available and in particular the practical BTEC and vocational courses. Your sports college status offers you tremendous opportunities to undertake good-quality specialist courses, take on responsibilities, join in a broad range of after-school clubs and thus help you maintain a healthy lifestyle. You behave well around school, but a small minority do occasionally disrupt classes, particularly when they are not motivated by the lesson and not engaged in their learning. Attendance is satisfactory and improving. Overall, you are making satisfactory progress in your studies.

Your headteacher agrees with us that there are a number of areas that need to continue to improve, including:

- raising attainment in English and mathematics, in particular for the most able
- the quality of teaching, ensuring that lessons are interesting and challenging and that marking clearly indicates how you can improve your work.

You have a critical role in helping to develop your school. It is important you attend regularly, concentrate in your lessons and work hard in strengthening your literacy and numeracy skills.

Best wishes to you for your future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Paul Lowery

Her Majesty's Inspector

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