

# Withernsea High School Specialising In Humanities

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118075
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Riding of Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358257
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gina White HMI

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	937
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	118
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian Cloke
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr Fiona Ireland
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hull Road Withernsea HU19 2EQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 33 lessons taught by 33 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff, and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at performance and tracking data, the school development plan, safeguarding policies and questionnaires completed by students and staff. They also looked at records of parental involvement in the school and analysed 146 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The monitoring of students' performance and the analysis of data to track improvements.
- The impact of changes to the curriculum on students' achievement and enjoyment of school.
- The development of middle management in school and the impact this is having on outcomes for students.

## Information about the school

This school is of average size. It is located in a relatively isolated rural area of East Yorkshire, serving Withernsea town and the surrounding villages of Holderness to its furthest southern point. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average. Almost all students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and, of these, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school was designated as a specialist school for humanities in 2009 and holds a number of awards as an International School, a healthy school and a gold-level inclusion award. The school is an extended school and provides community access to adult education programmes, study support and a family learning programme. The school shares its site with the Connexions careers guidance and support service and Sure Start provision. The out-of-school club that operates as part of this provision will be inspected at a later date.

**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

Withernsea High School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. It provides a welcoming learning environment and staff are committed to the well-being and care of young people. The good quality of care and guidance of students is demonstrated in the support they receive. Transition into school and when they leave is attended to carefully so that they are confident about their next steps. As one student explained: 'Moving into this school is the best thing I have done in my life'. Most students are confident of getting help if they need it and feel happy and safe while at school. The good curriculum is built upon partnership with schools and training providers to meet students' needs better. Key Stage 4 and sixth-form students have better access to vocational and academic courses now than they did at the previous inspection and the good provision of enrichment activities has been strengthened further. The school's strengths in meeting the care and welfare needs of students and the provision of courses which are better suited to students' learning needs underpin their satisfactory achievement.

Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are low, but rising quickly. School data demonstrate that the majority of students in all key stages are now making satisfactory progress throughout the school. Measures to identify students who are starting to slip behind in their work have been strengthened and a wide range of intervention is in place. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the impact of earlier training and development is demonstrated more firmly in the current academic year. Good practice exists within the school and, in these lessons, teachers plan work that is pitched accurately to challenge individual students. It is founded upon good use of data and teachers' accurate assessments to identify students' strengths and areas of weakness. However, teaching is not like this consistently. Teachers are not identifying precisely enough what students know and can do and where there are gaps in their learning. As a result, students make satisfactory progress rather than moving on quickly in their learning. The majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. Few lessons are disrupted and most students and staff say behaviour is improving following revisions to the behaviour policy. Significant reductions in incidents of misbehaviour and exclusions demonstrate the improvement. The school is gaining ground in its plan to raise attainment and to tackle high absence rates. Attendance is improving strongly from a low base. For some students, their uneven attendance undermines the efforts that they and their teachers are making to secure their good progress.

Members of the governing body and the senior leadership team are committed to raise standards of attainment further and improve the quality of teaching. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school as well as areas that require improvement. However, the quality of school planning and analysis of the impact actions have on students' achievement is not sufficiently probing or rigorous to enable the school to move forward more rapidly. Well-founded decisions have been taken to match the curriculum

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better to the needs of students and to improve pastoral support. In this respect, partnerships with other providers have been used to great effect. Since the last inspection, systems and procedures in the school have been strengthened and brought greater consistency to the work of middle leaders. The school has retained the strong support of parents and carers. It provides satisfactory value for money and demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 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.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise attainment and improve students' progress by:
  - ensuring that teaching is consistently good and work is pitched accurately to challenge all students
  - strengthening measures in all subjects to identify more precisely what students know and can do and where there are gaps in their learning especially in Year 7
  - securing improvement in students' attendance.
- Improve the rigour and quality of school planning and evaluate critically the impact of actions on students' outcomes.

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

**3**

Students' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average. However, not all students achieved as well as they could reasonably be expected to do in GCSE examinations to achieve both English and mathematics. The school has taken robust action to ensure that all students now have opportunities to take both examinations. This development, together with the wider provision of vocational and work-related courses means students are better prepared for their futures. The proportion of students continuing in education, employment and training has increased rapidly and is above the national average. Students' progress since the previous inspection has quickened considerably and the gap to national averages narrowed in 2009 and 2010. A steady trend of improvement in specialist subjects is firmly established in the school. Systems for checking students' progress are secure and a range of intervention is targeted well to students who are underachieving. In all year groups across the school, effective strategies to intervene are in place in English and mathematics. Additional staffing and small class sizes are effective in supporting students' learning and progress. The school's own data suggest improvements are being maintained. The majority of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making satisfactory progress in lessons and some are making good progress. The variability in progress and attainment across and between subjects is due to insufficient challenge in some lessons.

Students, overwhelmingly, consider school to be a safe place. They know who to go to if they have concerns and are confident the concerns will be tackled. Students are adopting healthy lifestyles: take-up of physical education and sports and healthy school meals is above average. Some students are benefiting from well-targeted smoking cessation programmes. Students play a constructive role in the school community. Many are involved in the school council and the extensive sub-committees. Many more students

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contribute their views to surveys and take on a range of roles and responsibilities including, for example, the production of the school newsletter and sports leadership. Students are developing a sense of social responsibility by taking action to improve their local communities and around 200 students are involved in fund-raising and correspondence to support their link school in South Africa. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students' social development is developed well as a result of their high take-up of extra-curricular clubs and their active participation in enrichment opportunities and extended school activities.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Relationships between students and teachers are good. Most teachers manage lessons well and have good subject knowledge. Teachers are developing their practice to use a broader range of learning methods to engage students actively in lessons and to develop their independent learning skills more securely. Lessons are interesting and students are clear about what is expected of them, particularly in relation to examination requirements. There are clear criteria for assessment and students are also involved in setting their own targets. Students are encouraged to do their best, to take notes and to structure their answers. In lessons where students make the most progress, teachers plan the learning so that it is challenging and tailored better to meet the needs of groups and individuals. In such lessons, the quantity and quality of students' work and thinking is high.

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The curriculum is broad and balanced. Partnerships with schools and a local provider of work-based learning have expanded students' access, despite the geographical isolation, to a very wide range of academic and vocational courses including national diplomas and work-based learning. The school uses its resources well to meet the needs of particular groups, for example, provision of courses in acting, the basic skills course which supports a specific group of Year 7 students with English and mathematics, and the provision of hairdressing for 14&16-year-olds using the on-site salon. Opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular clubs, foreign travel, theatrical productions and activities are supported well by students and add greatly to their enjoyment.

Pastoral support through the house system and the student support centre form a well-organised arrangement that contributes effectively to the good development and well-being of students. Clearly targeted support for individuals and groups of students result in significant improvement in their behaviour and confidence. Students say that staff are welcoming and kind and they have great confidence in staff to deal with any issues they may have. The work to tackle the high and persistent absence of a small proportion of students has proved successful in bringing about reductions. Good-quality advice and guidance enable students to take the next steps in their learning confidently and knowledgeably.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The impact of leadership and management is reflected clearly in the trends of improvement in students' outcomes, although the school, rightly, recognises that the impact has yet to be fully realised in attainment. The school's ambition to improve the quality of teaching is reflected well in clear priorities in school plans. Senior staff make secure judgements on the quality of teaching. Staff are embracing training opportunities and initiatives to improve provision and outcomes for students. Middle leadership has developed since the previous inspection. Stronger practice in the leadership of the school's specialist subjects is being used in a highly focused way to develop further consistency in the quality of middle leaders work. However, the level of monitoring by middle leaders is not as consistent and rigorous as it could be in all cases. There is too much inconsistency in the way that teachers use assessment and school-held data to inform lesson planning.

Members of the governing body are developing their role in strategic leadership. They are supportive of the school and know the challenges it faces. They are discharging their responsibilities well, particularly in relation to safeguarding. The school is meticulous in its work to safeguard students and minimise risks to their safety. All adults are checked for

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their suitability to work in the school. There are robust systems in place for child protection, including effective work with students to ensure that they understand how to stay safe.

The school maintains good relationships with partners, parents and carers and their views contribute to the decisions leaders make. The school is making strategic use of partnerships successfully to widen students learning opportunities and to contribute to their care and guidance. Community cohesion is promoted and has had a positive impact in the school and local community to combat rural isolation. Students are proud of the changes they have made to the school environment and to develop spaces to play and socialise in their local community. The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination is satisfactory. This is evident in the improved progress that the great majority of students are making throughout the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. Good partnership arrangements enable the school to provide a wide breadth of academic and vocational courses and qualifications. The open entry policy to the sixth form enables students to continue their studies and access courses that enable them to progress to university, employment and training. The high quality of advice and guidance enables students to make informed choices confidently and almost all complete their courses. Students' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is broadly in line with national averages in the majority of subjects. However, the legacy of low prior attainment is reflected in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Some students have made significant improvements to improve and maintain very good attendance rates. Teaching ensures students know what is required to achieve their target grades and they receive

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helpful feedback to support their development of research and reasoning skills. Students are clear about course deadlines and are developing independence as learners to support them in the next step of their education and training. Students say the sixth form is 'like a family' and enjoy good relationships with their teachers and peers. Students enjoy their courses and they are meeting their expectations. Enrichment of the curriculum and the range of opportunities provided make a good contribution to students' learning and personal development. Students are well prepared for adult life as a result of their course programmes and the support they receive to help them to maintain healthy lifestyles.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires hold positive views of the school. They are satisfied with almost all aspects of the school's work and the impact this has on their children's enjoyment and progress. Some parents and carers noted that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During the inspection, inspectors observed little evidence of very poor behaviour; indeed, some of it was good, particularly during break and lunchtimes, and overall it was satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Withernsea High School Specialising In Humanities 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 937 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	21	100	68	13	9	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	33	23	94	64	10	7	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	42	29	94	64	8	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	21	94	64	14	10	4	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	17	106	73	8	5	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	14	102	70	17	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	10	102	70	24	16	3	2
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)	31	21	93	64	6	4	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	21	102	70	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	15	88	60	24	16	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	18	86	59	13	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	32	22	91	62	10	7	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	25	92	63	7	5	3	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



18 February 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of Withernsea High School Specialising In Humanities, Withernsea, HU19 2EQ**

Thank you for making us welcome and for your help and assistance during the recent inspection of your school. During the two days, we spoke to students, staff and governors, observed lessons and looked carefully at your work and we came to the judgement that Withernsea is a satisfactory school. We were particularly impressed by:

- how well the school meets your care and welfare needs to keep you safe and well informed and provides courses which better meet your needs and interests. This good provision is supporting you well and contributes to the satisfactory achievement most of you are making.
- the way in which you are contributing to your local community and particularly participating in the work of the school council and your good awareness and take-up of a healthy lifestyle. Together with the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular opportunities, this has a positive impact on your good development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The inspection team has asked your school to do these things to support you in improving your attainment and progress:

- make sure that teaching is consistently good and work is pitched accurately to challenge each of you
- identify more precisely what you already know and can do and where there are gaps in your learning in all subjects and especially in Year 7
- work with you and your families to help you to attend school more regularly
- improve the rigour and quality of school planning and evaluate critically the impact actions are having on your achievement.

You can play your part by letting teachers know when work is too easy or difficult.

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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