



Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 118075
LEA East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number 280235
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Ian Richardson

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Hull Road
School category	Community		Withernsea
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		HU19 2EQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01964 613133
Number on roll	1109	Fax number	01964 614560
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C Eldred
Date of previous inspection	1 September 2000	Headteacher	Dr F Ireland

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005	Inspection number 280235
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Withernsea High School is an average size 11 to 18 comprehensive school serving a community in an isolated rural area of East Yorkshire. There are higher levels of deprivation than average, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above the national average. The school is part of the East Riding of Yorkshire Excellence Cluster to help respond effectively to these factors.

Currently, the school has no pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, but the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average.

The school achieved specialist college status for technology in September 2000. The school achieved redesignation in 2005 and was successful also in being awarded specialist college status in humanities as a second specialism. The school provides a range of additional services to the community such as adult education, family learning, family support services, community use of facilities, Connexions services and a youth club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Withernsea is an effective school which, through the coherent efforts of staff, makes good provision for pupils. Standards are rising and pupils receive good education and care throughout the school. Effective collaboration with other agencies contributes well to a school which is focused on serving the needs of the pupils and the community. Specialist college status, now achieved in the two curriculum areas of technology and humanities, has helped with promoting good standards through the development of teaching and learning, which are good throughout the school.

Withernsea serves an isolated rural area and seeks to provide a wide range of courses suitable for the needs of the full range of learners aged 11 to 19. It has attracted extra resources through specialist college status and is collaborating well with other education providers to provide a good range of curriculum choices for the resources available. The school is providing good value for money.

The school shows outstanding strengths in management. There is a coherent and systematic approach to management that secures the focus on standards across the school. The school has improved significantly in areas for development described in the previous Ofsted report. The clarity of the self-evaluation undertaken by the headteacher and senior leadership group, and the quality of improvement planning seen, strongly suggest that the school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop monitoring and evaluation such that all staff contribute effectively to tracking the performance of groups as well as individual pupils.
- Continue to improve the analysis of performance data to inform more incisive intervention with pupils.
- Monitor the consistency of implementation of the behaviour policy and its impact on the management of learning.
- Continue to identify ways of expanding the post-16 curriculum, particularly in providing opportunities to students to follow vocational courses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' standards and achievements are good. Standards have risen overall for each of the past three years. Over the same time period pupils' attainment on entry to Year 7 has been below the national average overall. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 3 and by Year 9 their standards are in line with the national average. Good progress continues through Key Stage 4 as can be seen from the improved general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) exam results in 2005, which are now above the national average.

Records from previous years show pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and middle attaining boys have made less progress than other groups. Evidence from

observations during the inspection, and analysis of 2005 results, suggest that these groups of pupils are now generally making good progress in most lessons. Measures taken to improve boys' achievement have been very effective and the 2005 results demonstrate that boys now progress at a similar rate to girls.

In the sixth form, standards have risen overall for each of the last three years from a point below average to being around average for the nation. The 2005 examination results show that this trend of improvement continues and that progress is good. The school is proud of its inclusive sixth form which is the main post-16 provision for this rurally isolated area.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' attendance has improved steadily over the last two years, as a result of the good efforts made by the school. Attendance is now satisfactory, and truancy has dropped very significantly. The large majority of pupils arrive at school on time and get to lessons promptly.

Most pupils behave very well. They are friendly, polite and respectful with staff and visitors, and they get on well with each other in lessons and during recreation times. This generally high standard of behaviour is the result of the strong emphasis which the school puts on positive relationships. Pupils interviewed during this inspection felt that there is very little bullying. A minority of pupils do not behave well, but the school is generally able to manage their behaviour, and the number of pupils excluded is currently falling. Pupils' classroom behaviour is better in the more stimulating lessons: some pupils become disinterested when the teaching is dull.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Many pupils have responded well to school activities, such as the Refugee Week, which focus on concern for other people; this is an aspect which the school has developed recently. Their work in some lessons shows a good understanding of what motivates different people. Pupils interviewed have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Many contribute to activities to benefit the local community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory, with mostly good and some outstanding lessons, in all key stages. Teaching and learning are at the heart of the school's monitoring process and there are well established strategies for improvement, which are fully implemented in practice.

The focus on teaching and learning has resulted in improved standards and achievement. Inspectors' visits to lessons and discussions with pupils provided evidence of good and outstanding teaching in most areas of the school. In the best lessons,

Careful planning of well paced, varied activities engages and motivates pupils, who say they enjoy lessons because the teachers are friendly and help them. These good relationships support learning. Behaviour is managed effectively by very well structured activities that offer opportunities for individual, paired and group work. Teaching assistants and other classroom helpers are well deployed in support of those learners with additional needs.

Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve due to effective marking and feedback. They are aware of the challenging targets that they have been set and respond well by applying good levels of effort and enjoying their work. Pupils' progress is well tracked, and particular groups are effectively targeted and supported, for example, pupils who are at the grade C/D borderline of GCSE.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum for the full age range of learners. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, in addition to their core entitlement, are able to choose from a wide range of subjects, including creative and vocational courses. Work related learning, through visits, speakers and placements, has a high priority. An alternative curriculum is provided in Key Stage 4 for a targeted group with additional learning needs. The sixth form curriculum is constructed on the basis of student choice and a wide range of subjects is offered, however, this flexibility means that some groups are very small. The school recognises the need to broaden the opportunities for progression to vocational study and collaboration with other providers is a strong feature in this rurally isolated area, for example, links have been developed with a local college to establish a hair salon on the campus. Good opportunities for enrichment are provided through a variety of out of hours clubs, visits and visiting speakers; these enhance the curriculum for pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school works particularly well with a range of other agencies to ensure that good support is given to pupils whose behaviour or attitudes are poor. A specialist team of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, uses a very good range of activities to help these pupils in school and there is good liaison with their parents. The school has secure procedures regarding child protection and maintains good oversight of the progress of children looked after by the council.

All pupils are involved in a programme of review and evaluation of their progress at school and older pupils have good access to careers guidance and to advice about higher education. There is a well-structured programme of assemblies; those seen during the inspection were stimulating. The quality of form periods is varied and the policy of using these to follow up a serious theme is not in place in every year group.

The school has a comprehensive approach to ensuring safety on the premises, and pupils have very good access to first aid and advice on health.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The recently appointed headteacher is providing very effective leadership for the school. She has put into place an effective management structure to ensure the smooth running of the school. Heads of department have a clear view of the whole school priorities for development, and contribute to school improvement planning by planning effectively for the development of their subject areas. There are strong links, valued by staff, between subject teams and members of the senior leadership group.

The governing body is effective, and provides good support and challenge to the school. Governors are also linked to the subject teams, receiving monitoring reports, and participating in subject meetings. The culture of the school is clearly collaborative.

There is a clear focus on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. Thorough systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place to ensure the focus on standards is maintained in all subjects and aspects of school life. Issues are well tracked, for example, differential performance of boys and girls has been thoroughly monitored, and effective strategies put into place to bring about change.

The school has ensured that well qualified staff are in post, and has achieved this despite its rural isolation. The resources of the school are well managed and deployed to the benefit of pupils, for example, students in the sixth form describe how readily information and communication technology (ICT) is available to them for completion of tasks set and for independent learning. This good management of resources contributes effectively to pupils being well taught and cared for.

The self-evaluation process has been carried out in a systematic and rigorous way by the headteacher and senior leadership group. Evidence to support the self-evaluation is well organised and the school is able to respond rapidly and effectively to the enquiries from the inspection team. The leadership and management have brought about necessary improvements since the last inspection, for example, on attainment of boys, attendance, and pupils' cultural development. The quality of leadership and management provides a very good basis for further improvements.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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11 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the contribution you made to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to visit lessons and to talk with many of you. We also read the results of the questionnaires by your parents. These were very helpful to us.

This is a summary of our main findings which I hope will interest you.

We think the school provides you with a good education. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well, assisted by her leadership team. They have a clear idea about what the school does well and are taking steps to improve the things that could be better.

The improvement in the standards achieved in examinations and tests is much better than the targets set, and nearly two thirds of the Year 11 pupils got five or more good GCSE passes. We think most pupils are making good progress. Your school has rightly recognised that some pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities need more help, and this is now being provided.

Teaching in the school is good overall, and in some of the lessons we saw it was outstanding. Your school is making sure that most of the teaching reaches a good or better standard and is encouraging teachers to share ideas about teaching and learning.

We think that the school cares for you and supports and guides you in your education very well. It is a friendly and safe place to be. There is a good range of subjects for you to study and the opportunity to take work-related courses is improving. You have a good say in the way the school is run. We asked about bullying and think there are good procedures in place to deal with this when it occurs. The school encourages you to eat and drink healthily and to stay safe.

The school supports your personal development well. Attendance at school is much improved on previous years. We thought you were very polite and considerate during our visit. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is nearly always good. Occasionally, a few pupils do disrupt the learning for others, but this is not common. You have good opportunities to take on roles of responsibility and develop the skills you will need in your life ahead. You have a wide range of activities to get involved in outside lessons.

We have asked the school to:

continue to check on how well pupils are doing to make sure they do the best they can

continue to monitor how well pupils are behaving and how teachers can help pupils to improve their learning further

continue to improve the choice of courses offered in the sixth form, particularly in providing vocational courses.

We think the school is improving and that, with your support, it is now well placed to improve further.

We wish you well with your future.

Ian Richardson HMI

Lead inspector

Annex B