



John Smeaton Community High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108063
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 288016
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Sara Morrissey HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Smeaton Approach
School category	Community		Barwick Road, Leeds
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Yorkshire LS15 8TA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2930484
Number on roll (school)	924	Fax number	0113 2930486
Number on roll (6th form)	116		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Charles Naylor
		Headteacher	Mr John Daulby
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	6–7 December 2006	288016

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

John Smeaton Community High School is an average sized school with a small sixth form. It serves a district of north east Leeds which includes areas of significant social and economic disadvantage. There are more boys than girls and a high number are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils who transfer to John Smeaton from other schools is higher than average. Most pupils are White British and, compared with other schools, a very high proportion have learning difficulties. In recent years the number of pupils has fallen dramatically and the school has experienced turbulence as a result of significant staffing changes. The school will move into new buildings in 2007 as part of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). John Smeaton is the pilot for the Full Extended School in Leeds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

Standards attained by pupils at key stages 3 and 4 are exceptionally low and achievement is inadequate overall. Pupils entering the school in Year 7 lose ground, and make poor progress by the end of Year 9. However, recent strategies, implemented to increase pupils' progress during Key Stage 4, raised the achievement of targeted Year 11 pupils in the 2006 examinations and a higher proportion met their targets. Although there are examples of good practice, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, because planned activities do not consistently engage or motivate pupils to learn. Furthermore, pupils do not all acquire the skills necessary to help them to take responsibility for their learning and make good enough progress.

The headteacher leads the school well, and provides clear direction for all staff. He has worked effectively with the deputy headteacher to manage a period of significant change and has built the capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to tackle low standards and achievement more effectively. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses because of a self-evaluation process that is robust and central to school improvement. Governors monitor the work of the school and play an increasing role in holding it to account. However, although rigorous systems and structures have been implemented, they are not all fully established and so their impact on raising achievement and standards is uneven.

The school rightly takes pride in its inclusive ethos. The good care, guidance and support provided by a large team of staff ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development and well being. Attendance remains low, but the school has worked tirelessly to ensure that targets are met. Partnerships with parents and other stakeholders have improved and pupils feel that their views are listened to more. The great majority feel safe in school and think that behaviour has improved so that their lessons are disrupted less. As a result of the consistent implementation of agreed procedures, the foundations for future improvement are secure; staff morale has improved and the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Although standards at the end of Years 12 and 13 are below average, students make satisfactory progress considering their starting points on entry to the sixth form. Almost all students who start courses complete them. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders track the progress of students carefully and priorities for future development are clearly mapped out. The curriculum is limited in range, but it offers a selection of

academic and vocational courses that currently meets students' needs. The school recognises the need to further extend students' personal development by providing a wider range of enrichment activities. Students enjoy life in the sixth form and say that the teaching is usually interesting. However, their communication skills are not developed to the level expected. Good care, guidance and support enable students to make appropriate choices about their future, and the majority of them go on to further or higher education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' attainment in all Key Stages, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- Teach pupils the basic skills that enable them to be successful learners.
- Improve the quality of teaching by increasing the range of activities that engage and motivate pupils to learn.
- Further improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that achievement and standards are inadequate. Pupils enter school with standards that are considerably below average. Standards attained by pupils at the end of each key stage, despite some recent improvement at Key Stage 4, are exceptionally low and have been for several years. There is no significant variation between the attainment of boys and girls.

In 2005, results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 were very low. Under half of pupils attained even the lower level expected for pupils of that age and relatively few above that. In 2006, results improved slightly in mathematics, but they were lower still in English and science. Pupils do not receive a good enough grounding in basic skills and this severely limits the progress they make in English and mathematics and across the curriculum as a whole. As a result their achievement during years 7 to 9 is poor.

Results at Key Stage 4 were higher in 2006, from a very low base in 2005 and exceeded school targets. This was especially the case for those achieving five or more GCSE grades at A*-C and 5 or more A*-G. Results are still low in English and mathematics. However, unvalidated data suggest that pupils made satisfactory progress overall, especially the higher attaining pupils, which is an improvement on previous years. This is because of the increased tracking of their progress and specific actions taken to support targeted pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Rigorous strategies, used by different staff teams, ensure that pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall and improving. Although attendance is well below that expected, the school has good internal monitoring procedures and liaison with external agencies. This has led to significant improvement in the very low attendance patterns of many vulnerable pupils. The 'Discipline for Learning' policy has effectively improved attitudes to learning and behaviour in and out of classrooms and provided a suitable climate for learning. Pupils say they feel safe and that the environment is virtually free from bullying. Whole-school and year councils give additional responsibilities to students and increase the voice they have in whole-school issues. Many recent successes are because of the effective way academic and pastoral staff relate with a large number of pupils who have significant personal issues in their lives. A growing use of the local community enhances personal development through the use of additional skilled staff and extended visits. More pupils participate in extra-curricular activities and the school is part of the healthy award scheme. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The recent introduction of "stand-down" days is extending effectively the cultural experiences of pupils and these more inspirational activities are beginning to be extended to lesson time. Arrangements are in place to prepare pupils for learning and work. However, large gaps remain in the development of important key skills needed for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 3

Although the school has correctly identified examples of good practice, the overall quality of teaching is inadequate. This is because pupils do not learn adequately from their lessons to make good enough progress over time. Most teachers plan lessons following agreed guidelines. However, activities are not matched sufficiently to the needs of all pupils so that they do not acquire important basic skills to enable them to become independent learners. Furthermore, too many activities do not engage or motivate pupils to learn.

The most effective lessons are well prepared, proceed at a brisk pace and include the use of a range of stimulating activities and resources. Learning objectives are clear and referred to regularly. Relationships are good and a purposeful learning atmosphere is established. Pupils enjoy these lessons because they are interested and fully engaged whilst being given the fundamental skills to take responsibility for their learning. Common features in less successful lessons are the lack of varied and stimulating

learning activities and relevant visual resources. Teachers dominate too much of the lesson and provide too few opportunities for pupils to develop those skills that will enable them to make as much progress as possible. Consequently, pupils lose interest and their rate of progress slows. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that marking is generally regular and the best examples give pupils guidance on how to improve.

Regular monitoring of teaching by senior leaders is generally accurate. Identified areas for development enable support for individual teachers to be well targeted and good practice to be shared. However, the focus of lesson observations concentrates too much on teaching rather than on how pupils learn. As yet, improved teaching has not had a sustained impact on progress over time.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Many good features have been introduced during the last two years, but the full impact has yet to be felt in terms of standards and achievement. A well planned personal, social, health and citizenship education programme contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. Good links with the University of Leeds, for example, result in highly effective teaching of sexual health issues. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Progression is being carefully built into the whole school curriculum. Pathways that incorporate academic and vocational courses for students lead from Year 9 through to the sixth form.

Strenuous efforts are made to try to ensure that the needs of all students are met. The work-related dimension of the curriculum is strong in Years 10 and 11. All students study at least one vocational subject. Good relationships with partner institutions help the school to provide an extended range of accredited work-related courses that prepare identified pupils well for future training or employment. These pupils appreciate the opportunities their courses offer and, as a result, their attendance has shown a marked improvement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of care is a strength of the school. All staff are committed to the promotion of a caring and safe environment and a strong pastoral system supports both academic and personal development. Form tutors and pastoral staff know pupils well and pupils say they know who to approach for support. Talk shop and circle time are examples of activities that provide safe havens to grow self-awareness and gain positive self-esteem. Inclusion units and pupil support facilities play a vital role in integrating many vulnerable pupils into school life, improving their attendance, confidence and attitudes to learning. There is good evidence to show that many of the pupils on the special needs register are making sound progress in achieving short-term targets. As a

consequence of recently introduced monitoring systems, pupils know their targets and the school is well placed to step up the level of challenge necessary to improve the academic progress of all pupils to appropriate levels. The school recognises the importance of transition arrangements from feeder primary schools and appreciates the work still to be done to improve the learning skills of these pupils on arrival. Health and safety arrangements and procedures for child protection are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The headteacher has provided strong and purposeful leadership through a period of significant change and established a team approach to improvement. He has communicated a clear vision for the school, which underlines the principle that every child matters. He and the deputy head teacher have worked effectively together, to develop a school self-evaluation process that enables senior leaders to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. Rigorous measures have been put into place to tackle key priorities with some success. For example, behaviour has improved as a result of clear and consistently implemented procedures. However, actions taken to improve teaching have not yet improved the quality of learning sufficiently, to raise the standards and achievement of pupils and students in all key stages.

The quality of middle leaders varies but is improving overall because of a targeted programme of support and intervention, assisted by external agencies and the local authority. All are clear about their roles and responsibilities and have welcomed the self evaluation process as it helps them to assess their own performance and identify areas for improvement. Regular forum meetings enable middle leaders to focus on key priorities and share good practice.

Whole school planning provides a clear, strategic direction for school improvement. A range of activities are identified and milestones documents indicate how and when progress will be measured. Governors monitor the implementation of the plan appropriately and are more confident to ask questions as well as provide support for the school. They have established links with senior leaders to increase their understanding of the school's work.

Day to day management of the school is good and promotes an orderly environment. Limited resources and accommodation are managed well, although value for money is unsatisfactory overall. Effective partnerships have been established and are managed well, particularly with numerous external agencies. Emerging strengths in the quality of leaders and managers at all levels means that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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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?	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us during our recent inspection at John Smeaton. We appreciated the time we were able to spend talking to you about your work and general life at your school. I have summarised our main findings below.

We found that Mr Daulby and all the staff have worked hard to ensure that you are well supported and guided throughout your time at school. Some of you told us that behaviour has improved because of "Discipline for Learning" which sets out clearly what is expected of you. You also like the rewards that follow good effort and behaviour. However, many of you still do not do as well as you should in exams and tests because not all of the teaching is as good as it should be. Some of you told us that you enjoy lessons, especially when work is practical and where you can become actively involved in your learning, but this does not happen often enough. Also, a number of you do not attend school regularly and this also affects your learning. Although your teachers are taking good steps to improve your achievement and the quality of teaching, it is too early to measure whether they are working effectively. We have agreed with Mr Daulby that there are a number of important things to concentrate on, to improve your experience at school and help you to do well. These are to:

- Improve exam results in all your subjects, but especially in English mathematics and science;
- Focus on teaching you the skills that will help you to learn and make better progress;
- Make lessons more interesting by including different activities that encourage you to learn for yourselves
- Further improve attendance

Inspectors will visit again during the next year to see how the school is getting on with its work. You have an important part to play by coming to school regularly, working hard and continuing to behave well so that you can all make good progress in your learning.

Best wishes for your future success.