

Westborough High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107775
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	324653
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	John Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	889
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mumtaz Mir
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Pruchniewicz
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
School address	Stockhill Street Dewsbury West Yorkshire WF13 2JE
Telephone number	01924 325223
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school is situated in a community which has much higher than average levels of deprivation. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is almost double the national average. Most students live locally and almost 80% of students originate from minority ethnic heritages, with Pakistani and Indian heritage students making up the largest groups. There are increasing numbers of students joining the school from Eastern Europe and around a fifth of students are White British. A very high proportion of students speak English as an additional language, although relatively few are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion of students with a statement of special educational need is increasing. Students' prior attainment has been well below average on entry to the school in the past, but is improving and is currently below average.

The school has Leading Edge Status and in September 2008 gained specialist business and enterprise, and arts college status. The school holds Investors in People Accreditation, the Artsmark Gold Award and Careers Quality Award. The school provides a range of extended services, including a literacy development programme for parents, community enrichment activities and off-site study support for students.

The school is part of the National Challenge and is also subject to reorganisation proposals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Westborough is a satisfactory but improving school and provides satisfactory value for money. Some aspects of its work are good and the school is rightly proud of its inclusive nature and the high regard with which it is held in the communities it serves. Students enjoy coming to the school and value the commitment of staff who work hard on their behalf. Currently, students' achievement and the standards they reach are inhibited by their low literacy and numeracy levels on entry to the school and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. The school recognises this and has recently introduced a number of improvement strategies. These have included strengthening transition links and asking all staff to focus on consolidating students' basic skills during lessons. These measures together with changes to the curriculum; staff training; and enhanced assessment, tracking and support, are slowly beginning to bear fruit. Standards are rising and, although they remain below national averages, the gap is closing. Consequently, students are making better progress.

Most students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make broadly satisfactory progress during their time in the school relative to their starting points. However, the progress boys make in English is much slower than that of girls. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good practice and pockets of outstanding practice, but this is not typically the case and students' learning is hampered by the inconsistency that exists. Students' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well, relate well to each other and attendance levels are good. Students take an active role in school and local community life, and understand the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles. They feel safe and acquire a range of skills that will support their future economic well-being. The curriculum is also good and students follow courses that match their needs, abilities and aspirations. This ensures that most students go onto further education, employment or training when they leave school. The care, guidance and support of students is good overall.

Leadership and management are good and are driving the improvement process. There are clear signs of impact, particularly in the improved outcomes for students, the building of further management capacity and curricular development. The school's work to promote community cohesion and the work it does in partnership with others to promote learners well-being is outstanding. The school community is multicultural and ethnically diverse within which students co-exist happily and harmoniously. The impact of the specialist subjects, in terms of their provision, performance and influence across the school, is good and growing. Governance is good and governors challenge as well as support the school's senior leaders. There is good capacity to improve based on the improving standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve the achievement of students, particularly boys, in English and further improve all students' progress in mathematics.
- Share best practice and remove inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to increase its impact on students' learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards attained by students at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are much lower than national averages, particularly in English and mathematics. However, their performance represents satisfactory achievement when you consider their prior attainment on entry to the school, which is also much lower than national averages. Over the past three years there has been a rising trend in students' attainment and progress overall, and in the key subjects of English and mathematics, albeit from a low baseline. However, students' progress remains slow in English.

The school's own 2008 Key Stage 3 data show results in English and science were well below average, while students' attainment in mathematics was closer to, but still below, average. The 2008 Key Stage 4 results saw 28% of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, which was well below average and led to the school being included in the National Challenge for not meeting the government target of 30%. The proportion of students gaining five A* to C grades excluding English and mathematics was higher at 51% and the best in the school's history, but this is still well below national averages. The proportion of students gaining five A* to G grades was 95%, which is above the national average and reflects the school's inclusive ethos. Students attained highly in most of the specialist college subjects, which support well the school's agenda of raising standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and this enables them to achieve in line with other students in the school.

Inspectors found, and the schools' data confirmed, that students are making satisfactory progress towards achieving their realistic targets. The school has recently introduced additional robust arrangements for assessment, tracking and evaluating students' progress, which are helping to accelerate their achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being is good overall. They enjoy school, seen in their good attendance and the positive way they work and cooperate with each other. Students behave well in lessons and around the school because they understand the clear behaviour policy and value the system of rewards. There have been no permanent exclusions over the past three years and the number of fixed-term exclusions is very low. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, while their preparation for living in a multicultural society is excellent. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community. They undertake work in the locality with residents, perform in local arts groups and serve on local community forums that discuss issues with local leaders, the police and other agencies affecting their community. They also involve themselves actively in school life, participating in the many extra-curricular opportunities available and serving as school council members. Students particularly enjoy the opportunities to work with children in partner schools, a result of specialist status development work and/or school sport partnership initiatives. Their involvement in these activities builds students' self-esteem and confidence well. Students say they feel very safe and secure because of the high levels of support they receive from staff. They know any incidents or issues arising will be dealt with effectively and sensitively and express few concerns about bullying. Students understand the benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles and are socially and emotionally mature, helped by the school's links with many

health-related organisations and good lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Students are well prepared for future work and training through the comprehensive programme of careers, work experience and enterprise education. Students who find learning in a school environment difficult to cope with in particular benefit from links with local employers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The impact of teaching on learning is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of high-quality, good and outstanding teaching across the school, particularly in music, physical education, and business and enterprise. Generally, the school has established a good climate for learning. Planning and classroom management is sound and staff cultivate good relationships with students, who have positive attitudes to learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for targeted students with individual learning needs.

In the best lessons teachers have very high expectations of students, who relish the challenge. Staff use probing questions, allowing students to think and reflect more deeply about what they are learning. Activities are highly engaging and assessment information is well used to support learning. Students are encouraged to think creatively, work independently and activities are planned that enable students at all levels to achieve their full potential. In less effective lessons questioning is vague and insufficiently directed towards individuals and the amount of learning taking place goes unchecked. At present there is insufficient good or better teaching to accelerate the rate of students' progress in English and mathematics. The good and sometimes outstanding practice in some areas is not routinely shared with other staff and contributes to the inconsistency that exists. Senior leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address the issues.

Some marking clearly tells students what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. This helps them judge how well they are doing in relation to their targets. However, not all marking gives clear advice and in some instances work is not regularly marked. A virtual learning environment is being developed and is starting to provide further learning opportunities for students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Students enjoy a broad and well-balanced curriculum, where the range of courses is regularly reviewed and improved to match the individual needs and interests of all learners. As students move through the school, provision becomes more personalised.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum focuses on improving students' basic skills across all subjects. An extensive primary liaison programme enables the school to gain good knowledge of each new student and therefore plan appropriate provision. Despite varying levels of ability, all Year 7 students study a modern foreign language, which builds upon their experience at primary school. Alongside the academic provision, for one week each year, all Year 9 students are involved in a programme of community-based activities. In Key Stage 4, students are guided by staff onto appropriate pathways and choose from a range of courses, including GCSEs and vocational options. Links with other schools, organisations and businesses enable the school

to enrich the provision and to ensure that the curriculum is tailored to individual students' needs. Specialised alternative courses, which provide a range of residential and practical opportunities, are designed for students who are less academically minded and for vulnerable students. Careers education and guidance is good and most students, 91% in 2008, progress to further education, employment or training. This is impressive in an environment of very high local unemployment.

The extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities promotes responsibility, enjoyment, self-confidence and contribution to the community. Many students immerse themselves in activities ranging from football, dance, music, drama and enterprise activities that support the development of students' financial and economic awareness to study skills and revision workshops.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support provided to pupils is good overall. Within this, pastoral care and support is outstanding. Staff pride themselves on knowing each student well and develop excellent links with parents and many external support agencies. This partnership approach helps to ensure that students' individual needs are well met. The school is fully inclusive, with the needs of all students very much at the heart its work. Provision for vulnerable students is bespoke and parents and individual students value the close monitoring and sensitive support provided by pastoral staff. This might include time in the learning support unit, one-to-one sessions with learning mentors and teaching assistants or referral to a partner agency.

Appropriate child protection and health and safety systems are well established and checks on new staff satisfy government requirements. Behaviour is consistently well managed across the school, with key staff providing very good support for all teachers. A wide range of programmes, including well-planned transition days, ensure that new students settle quickly. Through the school council, students play an important role in promoting community cohesion. There is good monitoring of academic progress. There are clear targets set for all students, regular reviews of their progress towards them and appropriate intervention and support where necessary. Students know their targets and what to do to improve further. This is enhanced by a greater focus on 'guided' peer and self assessment. As they move through the school, students benefit from good guidance about choices, including careers and subject options.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good at all levels, underpinned by effective support and strategic thinking from the headteacher and her senior leadership team. Together they provide clear direction which has the full support and commitment of staff, who feel closely involved through regular consultation and improvement planning with senior leaders.

The headteacher has strengthened capacity in leadership by rationalising roles and establishing more effective ways of working, which is improving the school's efficiency and effectiveness. Staff benefit from good training and are held to account for the quality of their work by rigorous performance management. Self-evaluation is accurate and informed by seeking parent and student views of the schools' performance. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the quality

of provision via faculty reviews and learning walks help to ensure that the school is not only aware of its strengths and areas for further improvement but can plan appropriate intervention and support where necessary. Recently, this has included plans to improve the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Scrutiny of parental questionnaires shows the vast majority have very positive perceptions about the quality of education the school provides. The impact of leaders and managers is very evident in the way issues from the last inspection are being tackled. Crucially, standards are rising and students are beginning to make better progress. Leaders have successfully steered the school through a series of turbulent periods, including significant staffing instability and a number of high-profile serious incidents in the local community which were the subject of national media attention.

The school's specialist status and subjects are increasing its sphere of influence. Alongside the boost to facilities and equipment for everyday use, the array of enrichment activities is capturing the imaginations of students and the local community. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school helps to ensure that students, staff and parents acquire an excellent sense of their place within the school, local, regional and global community. Harmony among students from different ethnic heritages is exceptional, underpinned by the school's ethos of equality and fairness. The school has developed some very strong links with its various local communities, for example through the project that sees staff delivering sessions in the local mosques.

Governors fulfil their duties well. They support and challenge senior managers and are very ambitious for the school. They have a clear view of how the school operates through the committee structure, regular liaison with the headteacher and visits into school. The school values the intensive support from a National Challenge adviser, who also acts as its School Improvement Partner. Capacity for improvement is good given the improving trend in outcomes for students. Financial management is sound.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Westborough High School, Dewsbury, WF13 2JE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we visited recently to find out about the quality of education the school provides for you. We learned a lot from observing your lessons and talking to many of you. We also read all the questionnaires completed by your parents.

We think Westborough is a satisfactory school with a number of good features. Your personal development and well-being are good and you obviously enjoy school because your attitudes to learning, behaviour and attendance are all good. At present the impact of teaching on your learning is satisfactory. There is room for development in this area as there is some inconsistency, which if addressed would help to ensure that you learned more effectively. The standards you reach at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are lower than national averages, but because you start the school in Year 7 with lower than average standards, this represents satisfactory progress. However, your performance in mathematics and particularly in English requires further improvement. The school's specialist status is having a positive impact and has helped to raise standards and improve your community links. The work the school does to promote community cohesion is outstanding and you play a big part in its success. Your curriculum is good and well matched to your needs and interests. There are a number of options available to you, such as business and enterprise and work experience that will enhance your employability. The school supports and cares for you very well and the guidance you get to improve your learning is good. The leadership and management of the school are good and the staff are committed to continuing to improve the school.

Staff have already begun to introduce a range of improvement strategies, some of which are already making a difference. In addition, we have asked them to further raise standards and improve the progress you make, particularly in English, and in mathematics. We have also asked for inconsistencies in the quality of teaching to be removed, so that you can learn more effectively. I know you are proud of your school and I urge you to support staff in their efforts to tackle these key issues.