

Guiseley School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108085
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	324703
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1323
Sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M King
Headteacher	Mr P Morrissey
Date of previous school inspection	15 May 2006
School address	Fieldhead Road Guiseley Leeds West Yorkshire LS20 8DT
Telephone number	01943 872315
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Guiseley School is larger than average in size. It serves an area which is mixed but generally advantaged in terms of social and economic indicators. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and there are few learning English as an additional language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that usually found. The school is a fourth phase Specialist Technology College. Guiseley has Advanced Healthy School status, holds the Intermediate International School and Artsmark Silver awards and also has Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school which has addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection most effectively. As a result, standards in science are better and the academic guidance students receive is now much more effective.

From above average standards on entry to the school, students make good progress in both key stages, achieve well and reach well above average levels of attainment in their GCSE examinations. Results in mathematics are particularly good and standards in English are rising steadily. More students are entered for examinations in modern languages than in most other schools and standards in these subjects are also very impressive. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly well because of the excellent support they receive from the adults who work with them.

Pupils develop well personally too, and their attendance is consistently above average. They have a keen understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle, and are well aware of the importance of keeping fit. They see the importance of helping each other: anti-bullying ambassadors and students involved in the Child Line in Partnership with Schools (CHIPS) programme try to ensure that all feel safe and happy. Behaviour is good overall and students are proud of their school.

The school's ongoing emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning means that there are now examples of outstanding teaching in both key stages. Teachers know their subjects well and have good relationships with their students. Questioning is good and in many lessons students are required to justify their answers. In some lessons, there are not enough opportunities for students to be sufficiently independent in their learning and thinking and the challenge for them to reach higher standards is therefore not always great enough.

The curriculum is good and is developing year on year because of the school's relentless determination to meet the needs of each individual in an ever-changing society. There is a good range of vocational courses, for example, and students better suited to such courses are now being prepared for possible entry into the sixth form. The benefits of specialist technology status can be seen in many areas of the school, but not in all: its impact is not consistent in all subjects.

Parents speak positively of the good care and support their offspring receive. For example, one parent comments, 'The school puts in a lot of effort to ensure that the transition from primary school is as stress free as possible and they make our sons and daughters feel safe.' Indeed, pastoral care is a strength of the school and students identified as vulnerable benefit from comprehensive and sensitive support.

The headteacher provides clear direction for school development and he is supported well by staff and governors, all of whom believe that senior leaders listen to and consider their views closely. Guiseley is most certainly a 'thinking school', one in which performance is always under review and one which strives to include each individual in everything it has to offer. The well-being of staff, too, is a key priority. It continues to provide good value for money and it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is a good sixth form with open access to all, in which students achieve well and reach above and, in some subjects, well above average standards by the end of Year 13. Students are proud of their sixth form, speak highly about the range of experiences open to them and display mature attitudes to their work.

Students are personable and polite. They involve themselves in a wide range of enrichment activities, including international links and visits. They enjoy supporting younger students in their roles as buddies and mentors and their impact in all areas of school life is positive.

Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have a secure knowledge of their subjects and challenge their students to higher levels of thought through good questioning. As a result, many students make extensive contributions in class and demonstrate their enjoyment of advanced study. The curriculum is being developed quickly and is responsive to the changing needs of students. There is an increasingly good balance between academic courses and those with more vocational content. Students speak appreciatively of the good support and guidance they receive on entry to Year 12 and throughout their time in the sixth form. Careers advice is good and students are supported well when applying for university entrance.

The sixth form is well led and managed. There is a careful and rigorous analysis of performance in all areas and an overriding concern to meet the needs of individual students, whose views are listened to closely. Good teaching, improving standards and a curriculum which increasingly considers the varying aspirations of students, demonstrate that the sixth form can look to the future with confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure students have more opportunities to develop their independent learning and thinking skills, to increase the level of challenge in the classroom.
- Extend the impact of specialist status across the whole curriculum and throughout all areas of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although there is some variation from year to year, students generally enter Year 7 with above average levels of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Good teaching, a curriculum which meets the needs of students increasingly closely, and much improved academic guidance lead to students making good progress across the school. Indeed, such is the effectiveness of support for students who sometimes struggle in lessons that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress in their academic work. Students achieve well overall in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 11. Moreover, the GCSE results in 2008 were the highest in the school's history. Attainment in science has improved since the previous inspection, standards in English are rising and the very impressive results in mathematics have been maintained over several years. The school is rightly proud of the well above average standards students reach in many other subjects too. There is a much greater proportion of students reaching the higher GCSE grades in modern languages than seen nationally and many students' degree of fluency

in French and German belies their years. There is a similar picture in the sixth form and students in the current Year 13 are on course to reach their challenging targets in the A-level examinations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students develop well into responsible and sensitive young people, who are more than willing to support others inside school and, through a variety of charity appeals, outside its walls too. Students involved in the CHIPS initiative, for example, mentor their peers who are experiencing difficulty and the anti-bullying ambassadors have produced an impressive policy on how students should engage with each other. Sixth formers have been trained as mentors by a local university and use their new-found skills to support their younger counterparts.

Behaviour is good overall but the school, and a significant number of parents, recognise that a small minority of students sometimes engage in low level misbehaviour. The school is addressing this through a Behaviour Review and the building of a new Student Support Centre. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and students benefit from thought-provoking assemblies, which teach them about cultures different to their own. Students enjoy school and their attendance is consistently above average. They have a keen awareness of what makes a balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle: many take full part in the wide range of physical and sporting activities on offer to them.

Good progress in both their personal and academic development, and the impact of specialist status in providing increased access to the latest technology, mean that students are well prepared for the next stage in their education or for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school continues to work hard and successfully to ensure greater consistency in teaching quality across the curriculum. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in all key stages and in a range of subjects. In most lessons, teachers' questioning encourages students to give extended answers and to justify their opinions. In an outstanding Year 13 history lesson on the 1848 Revolutions in Germany, for example, challenge was relentless and students' contributions would not have been out of place in an undergraduate seminar. Relationships between students and between students and staff are strong and teachers have high expectations of what their students can do. Comments such as, 'Don't worry if you don't get everything right!' ensure that no-one is afraid to make mistakes and that students of all levels of ability have an equal chance to benefit from what lessons have to offer. There are many opportunities for students to act as a learning resource for each other in pairs and groups. On occasions, however, students are not given sufficient opportunities to become more independent in their learning and thinking, and levels of challenge suffer as a consequence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is under continuous review. It is responsive to the sometimes changing interests and aspirations of students and meets their personal, emotional and academic needs well. It comprises a good range of academic subjects but applied and vocational courses are developing apace. Students have opportunities to study two modern languages in Key Stage 3 and such is the popularity of these subjects that there is a well above average take-up and entry for GCSE examinations. The effect of specialist status across the curriculum is variable: it does much to prepare students for life in an increasingly technological society but its impact is not fully apparent in all subjects.

Students are prepared well for their transition to the next stage in their education and they speak highly of the advice they receive when choosing their option courses at the end of Year 9. Similarly, students planning to enter the sixth form are grateful for the comprehensive guidance they receive on subject combinations, career opportunities and entrance to higher education. Furthermore, the school is now working on an extension to the sixth form curriculum, to meet the needs of students less inclined to follow academic pathways but who show an interest in post-16 study.

There is a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. As students say, 'There are so many clubs we can attend. Every subject has one and it is sometimes difficult to make our minds up on which ones to choose!'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The utmost consideration for the needs of all is at the very heart of everything the school tries to do. Pastoral care is of the highest order and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as vulnerable receive outstanding support from teaching assistants and learning mentors. As a result, these students achieve outstandingly well in both their personal development and academic work. In addition, students in all key stages are more than willing to support and counsel those experiencing difficulty. Child protection and safeguarding procedures, including risk assessments, are securely in place and fully meet government requirements.

Academic guidance is much improved since the previous inspection and most students are aware of their current attainment, their academic targets and how to reach them. The aspirations of many students have been raised and significant numbers are now aiming for even higher targets. Assessment is regular; teachers use the data collected to plan their teaching and to ensure that any underachievement is addressed rapidly. Marking is generally good and students receive accurate advice on how they can improve their work. However, student planners are not used consistently well in Key Stage 3 to facilitate student-staff discussion on what is needed for higher levels of performance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads by example and has a clear vision for how the school should develop. This vision is shared by the talented and committed senior

leadership team, which is held in high regard by staff at all levels of responsibility. Teachers comment that channels of communication in school are a strength and add, 'Senior leaders consult us, listen to us and support us.' As a result of an ongoing emphasis on professional development, middle leaders have a good understanding of performance in their specialist areas. Moreover, the sharing of good practice is encouraged and staff are therefore fully aware of the value and impact of a range of innovations across the whole curriculum.

Self-evaluation of all aspects of the school's work is both honest and accurate and the school recognises that the impact of specialist status is not consistent across the curriculum. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, have strong links with subject departments and hold senior leaders rigorously to account.

The school contributes well to community cohesion and teaches its students about the evils of racism and discrimination. It does much to engage with communities outside its walls and the International School award confirms the school's impressive work in raising the global awareness of its students, for example through its work on British Council project 'Interconnecting classrooms', which forges links between schools in Leeds, Tokyo and Busen (Korea).

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	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	2	
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	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 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?	2	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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?	No	

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

Thank you for your impressive contribution to the inspection recently. You made us feel welcome and we enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We are particularly grateful to the students who came to talk to us on Monday lunchtime and to the members of the CHIPS programme who gave up their time to share their views with us on Tuesday. We also enjoyed the assembly on Malawi and will never forget the message from the African student, 'Remember Me.' We would now like to tell you how well your school is doing.

Guiseley is a good school with a good sixth form. You achieve well in your studies and the standards you reach are well above those seen in many other schools. You develop well personally too and so many of you support your classmates and other students when they are finding things difficult. Most of you behave well, but there is a small minority of students whose behaviour is not always as good as it should be. You benefit from good and sometimes outstanding teaching and your teachers know their subjects really well. Those of you who sometimes find the work difficult receive excellent support and because of this you make outstanding progress. All the adults who work with you care a lot for your well-being and they try hard to make sure that you enjoy school. You certainly enjoy the many extra-curricular activities and subject clubs which are open to you.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are always trying to make Guiseley an even better school and I have made a couple of suggestions to help them. I have asked them to give you enough opportunities to develop your thinking and learning skills in class, to challenge you to reach even higher standards. I have also asked them to make sure that your school's specialist status in technology has a greater impact in all the subjects of the curriculum.

Thank you all again for your kindness and for helping us with the inspection.