

Wolfreton Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118083
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	326760
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Ann Wallis

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	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1844
Sixth form	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Wilson
Headteacher	Mr David McCready
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2006
School address	South Ella Way Kirk Ella Hull HU10 7LU
Telephone number	01482 659356
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Age group	11–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Wolfreton Language College is a very large school, situated in Kirk Ella in the East Riding of Yorkshire. The school is on a split site, the lower and upper schools being approximately 1.5 miles apart. Most students come from the surrounding areas, which have lower than average levels of social deprivation. Around a fifth of the students are resident within the boundaries of Kingston-upon-Hull. The school is a partner in the Haltemprice Sixth Form Consortium. The school has achieved specialist status for modern foreign languages. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and very few do not speak English as their first language. The school 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: 3

Wolfreton is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school which is well led and managed. The very clear, determined and charismatic leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the senior team, and an increasingly rich and varied curriculum, are key strengths of the school which are contributing to its good capacity for further improvement. The school's language specialism has enriched the curriculum and enhanced the good links the school has with a range of partners both local and overseas. In this very large split-site school, the effect of new initiatives to raise achievement has taken time to be felt. However, current development strategies, including a clear strategic direction, more effective monitoring procedures, accurate tracking of students' progress and helpful learning intervention strategies are now having an impact on learning and beginning to make a real difference in raising standards and improving achievement further.

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the school with above average standards and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school to reach above average standards when they leave Year 11. In 2008, students reached above average standards in tests at the end of Year 9 and achieved well in English and mathematics. However, results indicate that progress slows in Years 10 and 11. In GCSE examinations in 2008, an above average proportion of students attained five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics. Standards in mathematics were above average but attainment in English was closer to the national average.

The school's very detailed analysis of assessment data shows that where teaching is good or better, most students are on track to reach their challenging targets this year. The quality of teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, is still too variable and consequently, in some lessons, students are not achieving as well as they might. In good and outstanding lessons, the pace of work is brisk, varied resources engage students' interest and they really enjoy learning. In less successful lessons, some students lose interest in their work when assessment information is not used well to match tasks to their levels of ability; as a result, their behaviour deteriorates and the pace of learning is slower.

Parents are very appreciative of the good care the school takes of its students. One parent summed up the views of several others by commenting, 'If there have been any problems the staff have dealt with them quickly and well'. Staff provide very timely and effective support particularly for the most vulnerable. Students say that their teachers are 'always there for them' and are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem or issue. Students' progress is tracked very carefully; they have clear targets to aim for and extra help is always available for those who need it. Students' personal development is satisfactory overall and has good features. Students are very clear about how to stay healthy. They are keen to take on responsibility and contribute to the community; their good basic skills prepare them well for the world of work. Attendance is average. Low level disruption slows learning in a minority of lessons and some students are not good at managing their own behaviour. Nevertheless, behaviour is satisfactory overall because many students have more mature outlooks and positive attitudes to learning.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students in the sixth form benefit from a good standard of education. They have the opportunity to choose from a very wide range of academic AS- and A-level courses and vocational courses. Students are well advised about suitable courses and consequently retention rates are very high. They are very positive about the opportunities that the school provides for them and enjoy their education. In class they display mature attitudes to their study and often produce work of an exceptionally high quality, for example, in textiles. They readily accept and enjoy taking responsibility, for example, in the running of the senate, community sports-leader work and helping younger students in class. These features are also reflected in the very good range of extra-curricular activities that the school offers.

Students achieve well. Results in the sixth form are above average and rising in response to the efforts that the school has made to improve classroom practice for this age group. The curriculum provides students with a secure platform for further study or for joining the working population. Students say that they receive plenty of help and guidance. They understand their target grades and get regular feedback on how successful they are in meeting them. There are temporary arrangements in place for the leadership and management of the sixth form. These are effective in driving results upwards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the current development strategies lead to sustained improvements in achievement and examination results at Key Stage 4.
- Reduce the variability in the quality of teaching, especially in relation to the management of students and the use of assessment information to match tasks to learners' levels of ability.

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 are above average and achievement is satisfactory. Year 9 students achieved well in mathematics and English and reached above average standards in the national tests in 2008. GCSE results were also above average. Achievement at Key Stage 4, given the students' starting points and capabilities, was satisfactory. Standards in mathematics were higher than those in English. In Year 9, the school came very close to meeting its challenging targets but the target for the number of five A* to C grades at GCSE was not met. Students achieved best in mathematics, geography, history and physical education but less well in languages where specialist targets were met in German, but not in French. However, the impact of language college status resulted in more students achieving a higher grade pass in a modern foreign language than is the national average. All groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve similarly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students enjoy many aspects of school not least the very good opportunities for sport, music, 'deep' learning days and the extensive range of residential visits. They enjoy lessons where they are actively involved in learning but are less enthusiastic when they are required to sit and listen to the teacher for a relatively long time. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Students' spiritual, moral, social and moral development is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for students to develop in these areas vary between subjects and are particularly strong in religious education where students have good opportunities to learn about a range of faiths and cultures. Most students behave appropriately in lessons and around school. However, a significant minority of parents expressed concerns about behaviour, particularly in lessons. Students are very well informed to how to keep fit and healthy. This is exemplified by a real enthusiasm for exercise and competitive sport, and has been recognised by the school gaining Sportsmark and Healthy Schools awards. They feel safe and are aware how to keep safe. Through the school senate, by supporting younger students, through links with schools overseas, by raising funds for charities and participating in enterprise activities, students make a good contribution to their own and other communities. The school ensures the 'pupil voice' is heard and acted upon. Above average academic standards combined with good provision for supporting financial awareness and robust careers advice ensures that students are well placed for future success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school is developing a learning culture which explores the most effective ways of helping students to make progress, for example, through the 'Learning to Learn' course and 'Deep Learning' days where students develop a range of study skills. Clear and effective procedures are bringing about improvements in lesson planning. These clarify precisely what each student must, should or could achieve in a lesson and highlight ways in which they can learn from each other. Classroom practice is monitored closely. The impact of these measures is not yet fully embedded in lessons. Consequently, teaching is variable in quality and the overall standard is not quite as high as the school's assessment indicates. Occasionally, lessons are outstanding but there are also some inadequate ones. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers use assessment data to plan learning fully. They inform students about their progress and give clear direction to students on what they should do to improve. Vulnerable students are well supported by teaching assistants. Good relationships and well structured tasks enable students to achieve high standards. In less successful lessons, assessment information is underused in matching tasks to students' ability and teachers are not able to engage students or manage their behaviour well. As a result, some students become restless, noisy and make little progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has recently improved its curriculum. The flexibility promoted by the new National Curriculum is being used positively to deliver a shortened Key Stage 3 for a number of subjects. This provides enhanced opportunities for some students to take GCSEs early, and additional GCSEs, and for others to receive additional support as required. These initiatives have matched

the curriculum to students' needs much more closely, and increased their choice of courses and their enjoyment of learning. However, their full impact has yet to be realised in the standards attained by students at the end of Year 11. The four pathways into Key Stage 4 provide a very good range of academic and vocational options. Some courses are made available through good collaboration with other local partners, with better engagement of a number of previously disaffected students. New 'deep' day experiences, when students have the opportunity to study a topic in greater depth, have been well received by students and are contributing positively to their personal development and well-being. Arrangements for developing students' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and work related activities are good and contribute well to preparing them for the world of work.

The school's language specialism adds to the very good range of language courses taught and to extra-curricular activities that not only provide activities after school, but also take students to different parts of the world. Sporting and performance opportunities abound and are well received by students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has strengthened its arrangements for providing pastoral care, and students and parents speak highly of the good care and support the school provides. Support for vulnerable students is good and is enhanced by effective links with external agencies. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school's new system of behaviour management is said to have reduced referrals but staff do not always apply it consistently. The school has a very effective system to track students' progress. Students in danger of underachieving are identified at an early stage and offered very robust support in a wide range of subjects. However, it is too early for these improvements to have impacted fully on students' achievement. Parents report that pastoral staff help their children to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school. Students are well aware of their academic targets and, although there is some good quality marking that clearly tells them how to improve, marking sometimes fails to provide indications about how work can be improved. Students are able to access good quality guidance which enables them to make informed decisions about their futures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, well supported by able senior leaders, has set a very clear direction for the school which is shared by staff and governors and, although achievement currently remains satisfactory, is leading to rapid improvement. Senior and subject leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and are successfully implementing robust systems for monitoring the school's work. Although self-evaluation procedures are good, some assessment of the quality of teaching and learning is a little over-generous where practice is weakest. Data are used very well to track students' progress and ensure they receive support when needed. This is a very inclusive school where all are valued and equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Enterprise, languages and arts projects, links with other countries, work with charities, links with partner schools and organisations and the taught curriculum ensure students have a good understanding

of the needs of global, national and local communities whose faiths and cultures differ from their own.

Governance is good; governors are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses, and provide good support and challenge for the school's work. Resources are well managed and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school knows itself well, issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully and, given the good leadership, particularly of the headteacher, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3	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?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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?	3	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	3	
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**

1 April 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Wolfreton Language College, East Riding of Yorkshire,

HU10 7LU

Thank you for making me and the inspection team so welcome when we inspected your school this week. A particular thank you to those of you who took time to tell us about your school, about the lessons and activities you enjoy and about the progress you are making. Please also thank your parents for returning the questionnaires and letting us know what they think about your school.

These are the main findings included in our report:

- Wolfreton is a satisfactory school
- the sixth form is good
- your school is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff
- you reach above average standards in tests and examinations and your achievement is satisfactory
- lessons are satisfactory and the curriculum you follow is good
- your school gives you good care, guidance and support and your personal development is satisfactory.

What I have asked your school to do now to bring about improvements:

- continue to improve your achievement and examination results at Key Stage 4
- ensure teachers use the information from their assessments to match tasks to your levels of ability and help you to all behave well.

You can help your school to improve even further by attending regularly and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can. Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ann Wallis

Lead inspector