

Wetherby High School

Hallfield Lane, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS22 6JS

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching across many subjects is not good enough. As a result, not enough students make good progress and some make less than expected progress.
- Many teachers fail to check how well students are learning throughout the lesson. As a result, work set for students is not always at the right level of challenge.
- Teachers do not mark work well enough and the written comments they make to students do not always tell students enough about how to improve.
- Some teachers are not able to manage students' behaviour well enough and learning gets interrupted at times.
- The headteacher and other senior staff do not check carefully enough or well enough the learning and progress of all groups of students.
- Governors fail to conduct thorough risk assessments on property. They also do not monitor the use of additional funding (provided by the Government) to make sure it is improving the standards reached by the students it is designed to help.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is taking a determined lead in driving change. She is building a strong team of leaders of learning and helping staff to understand what they need to do to improve the quality of teaching.
- Students have many opportunities to take part in activities and events to support their personal development.
- Students enjoy school and many want to do well. Sixth form students say there is high expectation for them to go to university or get employment and they feel well supported by teachers and leaders.
- Students say they feel safe at school and well cared for. Bullying is dealt with quickly and firmly.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 33 lessons across Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form, of which eight were joint observations with the headteacher and other senior staff. In addition, short visits were made to a number of lessons to look at the quality of marking and feedback to students.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, teachers, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, groups of students, a parent and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of four responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, and an additional 60 responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses received to the staff questionnaire.
- They observed the school’s work and examined a number of documents including the school’s data about students’ achievement, improvement planning and monitoring files, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Gina White, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Johan MacKinnon	Additional Inspector
Peter McKay	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar to the average size secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium, (which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and the children of military personnel on active service overseas), is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students identified as disabled, or with special educational needs is broadly in line with average. The proportion that has a statement of educational need is well below average.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. Around 22% of students are from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. This is close to the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standard which is the minimum level expected for students' attainment and progress.
- Since the last inspection the school has become a Foundation school and established a Trust partnership with the University of York and the British Library.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of the school's leaders by:
 - making better use of data and information to keep a closer check on the learning and progress of all groups of students.

- Make sure that the governing body:
 - conducts thorough health and safety risk assessments of the school site
 - monitors the short-term impact that its decisions on how to spend pupil premium has on students' progress.

- Improve the impact that teaching has on students' learning by:
 - making sure that all students receive regular, high quality and constructive marking and feedback.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most students enter the school already reaching above average standards. Most achieve above average results in examinations when they leave in Year 11. Trends over time and in the lessons observed by inspectors show that students do not achieve as well as they might in all subjects, particularly in English. This is because inconsistencies in the quality of teaching hinder their learning, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4. Leaders are working to tackle this.
- Trends over time show that students make expected progress in mathematics and some make better than expected progress compared to students nationally.
- Extra guidance and support benefit Year 11 students in a range of subjects. Examination results of all groups of students, including those with special educational needs rose in summer 2012. These students made better progress in English to match their achievements in mathematics.
- The school's use of early GCSE entry in English and mathematics supported these high results. This worked well for some students, but others settled for lower grades than they might otherwise have achieved.
- Students with special educational needs and disabilities, and those who are eligible for pupil premium, do not achieve as well as their peers in the school. The gaps between their respective average point scores are narrowing but they remain too wide.
- The improvements noted in achievement for students at the end of Key Stage 4 are not secure across the school. This is because checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not good enough in all subjects and key stages.
- Sixth-form students consistently make better progress than students nationally at AS and A-level. Few achieve the highest grades. However, the vast majority of students continue to training, employment or university when they leave this school.
- Most parents thought their children made good progress. Some do, but most students say it is a mixed picture that they have come to accept. For example, 'I have learnt about "magic squares" since I started here, but most of the work I have done in the last six weeks I already knew'.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Some teaching is good or better, but where it is not, lessons did not capture students' interest. In these lessons, students were not actively involved in learning and teachers did not build on what students already knew so that they made rapid progress. Behaviour was not always managed effectively.
- In the best lessons, students developed insights and understanding, and grew in confidence as learners. Teachers checked at key points that students understood what they had been taught, so that they made fast progress. Students persevered with things they found difficult. They used 'memory cues' to help organise and secure their learning.
- Teaching in the sixth form is mostly good. A typical comment from sixth-form students was that 'when two teachers, with complementary specialist skills share the task of teaching the group, it helps us to get the best out of our design and technology lessons'.
- The school's literacy policy is under review, but teachers have already begun to adopt the ideas. A focus on key words and the use of technical language takes place across all subjects. In the best lessons, teachers ensured that all students understood the meaning and context of words.
- Good examples of teachers discussing work with students were observed in some lessons, but feedback to students remains inconsistent, as at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' written comments did not tell students enough about how to improve. On occasions, when errors were highlighted to students, regular checks did not always take place to see if they had

made the amendments. Some younger students did not know how well they were doing because their books had not been marked for six weeks.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Students are typically happy and enjoy coming to school. They arrive to lessons promptly and have good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour around the school is generally calm and orderly. There are periods in the school day when it requires improvement: typically in the afternoon and at lunchtime. Students say that interruptions to their learning 'occur regularly'. Fifty-four per cent of staff and 19% of parents who responded to Ofsted's questionnaires say that low-level misbehaviour is not managed consistently enough.
- Changing the management of behaviour is part of a major school development. This is resulting in some unsettled behaviour as students are still getting used to the higher expectations required of them.
- School leaders keep a close eye on the patterns of challenging behaviour which they manage well. Exclusions have fallen significantly in the last year.
- Students feel safe and well cared for. They are well-informed about the different forms of bullying. Students know about the full range of anti-bullying strategies to help them stay safe.
- Attendance is improving. The school is successfully working with students to help them to attend school more frequently. Data about the attendance of different groups of students are collected, but are not analysed in enough detail to identify patterns and trends.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher is determined and ambitious to improve the school. She has acted decisively to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have the full support of governors, the majority of parents, and a sizeable proportion of the staff. The changes are at an early stage but there are promising signs of improvement in the achievement students make.
- There are more checks on how well lessons are being taught. The local authority's support and training helped leaders to improve the quality of teaching. Students also recognise that it is improving.
- The headteacher has considerably strengthened the way in which teachers are appraised for their performance. Her re-organisation of staffing has resulted in a clear structure for holding staff to account.
- School development plans are not precise enough to support the rigorous checking of the learning and progress of all groups of students.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well throughout the curriculum. Tutor group sessions focus on topical news items such as drugs in sport. In addition, students' cultural and moral awareness is developed for example by exploring the slave trade.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are playing a stronger role in the strategic direction the school is taking. They share the head teacher's drive to improve the school and are closely involved in performance management and the restructure of staffing. They ask questions and make visits to the school to find out for themselves. They choose to spend pupil premium funding on intervention and one-to-one support for eligible students. However, they are not checking the impact that their decisions have on students' achievement. Governors do not review the health and safety risk assessments effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	108088
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	395598

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
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	896
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Damian Murray
Headteacher	Ms Andrea Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2009
Telephone number	01937 522500
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