



King Edward VII School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107140
Local Authority Sheffield
Inspection number 287725
Inspection date 13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Elizabeth Charlesworth

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Glossop Road
School category	Community		Sheffield
Age range of pupils	11–18		South Yorkshire S10 2PW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0114 2662518
Number on roll (school)	1678	Fax number	0114 2687690
Number on roll (6th form)	524	Chair	Mr R Blackwell
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr M Lewis
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	13 September 2006	287725

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large and popular comprehensive school and specialist language college is one of the largest in Sheffield with the largest sixth form in the city. The school occupies two sites over a mile apart. Both sites are in affluent areas of the city, the upper school being very close to the centre, its hospitals and universities. This does not reflect the background of the students who come from over 30 primary schools from all parts of this culturally and socially diverse city. The proportion of students having free school meals is broadly average as is the number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, though those with a statement of special educational need is about half the national average. More than twice the national average of students come from minority ethnic heritage; half of these have a first language other than English. There are more boys than girls in most year groups though this does vary year by year together with differences in the ethnic make up of cohorts. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is a little above the national average, though there are more students at either end of the ability range than is usually the case. Attainment on entry to the sixth form is also above average with around half the students coming from other schools, an unusual profile, though echoing the popularity of the school as the first choice of students and their parents. The school has been a training school since 2000.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good and successful school with several outstanding features, is well placed to continue its pursuit of excellence. The school is accurate in its view of itself and inspectors agree with almost all the school's judgements. Students told inspectors how much they value and rejoice in the diversity of the school population. They thrive in a secure environment where everyone is valued. Behaviour, particularly in lessons had been an issue for the school and though the staff and students say it is still not perfect, the incidence of unacceptable behaviour, and of exclusions, has fallen dramatically over the last two years. Students are confident that any concerns they have are speedily dealt with. In this the school works very effectively in partnership with many different agencies to ensure students know the dangers they face in the modern world and how to avoid them.

The school highlights as one of its special features the very wide range of sporting activities and the high rate of participation on the part of students. The students were falling over themselves to tell inspectors of their success locally and nationally and how proud they are of their school's triumphs, something quite exceptional. This links well with the way students learn about sensible eating through the curriculum, making them fit and healthy for the academic and personal challenges they face.

Students enjoy school and the many opportunities afforded to them. They spoke enthusiastically about trips abroad, arising out of the specialist status as well as linked to various other curricular areas. One important reason students like school so much is the good relationships they enjoy at all levels. They value the time and effort teachers put in, particularly before and after school, and they say they are well taught. A curriculum that is well matched to students' very diverse needs enables them to achieve well to reach above average standards. Progress is checked regularly and where students fall behind there is a well-oiled mechanism for supporting them and keeping them on track. The school is well aware that some of their systems are at an early stage of implementation and there is work to be done on ensuring consistency across all departments and especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. However, all staff, superbly motivated by some recent appointments to the leadership group, blend their efforts to ensure that students continue to enjoy life and achieve their full potential.

Community and students alike benefit from a level of collaboration which is second to none. The school enjoys a very good reputation in the city, so much so that many students are prepared to make a lengthy journey each day. There is recognition at an international level for the high quality of the work of the language college and as a centre of excellence for language. Representatives of outside agencies are keen to associate with the school thus enriching the life and work of the students. Students care about their local and global community and work hard at fund raising and volunteering, a quality that is at the heart of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a particularly strong feature of life in the sixth form.

At each point of transition in their school life, from when they come from primary school to when they leave the sixth form, students receive very good support and

advice about the choices they have to make. During the years in between there are many very good occasions for them to develop the skills that will equip them for a successful working life. The school has put a lot of effort into improving the facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), one of the things students like about school. In addition there are arrangements for work experience and the work related curriculum at Key Stage 4 caters well for those whose inclination is not for an academic diet. The international dimension of the school, the celebration of different languages and culture and the cohesion with which such a diverse population lives and works together are all good preparation for the future.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is a good sixth form that caters well for its students, who told inspectors, this is the best school in Sheffield. The school, however, took a more generous view of the leadership of the sixth form and though inspectors recognise the many strengths, there is as yet too much inconsistency in achievement. Students enthused about some inspirational teaching, adding that where teachers are passionate about their subject they expect higher standards. However, they recognise that not all teaching reaches these heights. In common with their younger colleagues they love the many opportunities for enrichment and in particular those that come through the language college. Good guidance and support helps them to keep on track with their work and ambitions and this is born out in their results at A level, where there is a high pass rate. However, good achievement is not uniformly evident and the school is aware of and tackling variation in performance on the part of both teachers and students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the very good practice in the best departments is implemented across the whole school and the sixth form.
- Ensure greater consistency in achievement at Key Stage 4 to match the rising standards at Key Stage 3.
- Ensure greater consistency of results and achievement in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students build very well on their slightly above average standards when they start in Year 7 to reach a level that is securely above average in Year 9 tests, and rising year by year. They consolidate their success in Key Stage 4 and usually reach above average results at GCSE. The results fluctuate year by year, however, in line with the different make up of individual year groups. It was no surprise to the school when the 2006 results fell from the previous year. The greater number of students with special educational needs was reflected in fewer passes at Grade C and above. Provisional figures show that students were close to meeting the targets the school had set based

on their prior attainment. In the sixth form results were also down on last year. Good overall achievement masks a variation in individual and departmental performance, though enough students made enough good progress to justify the school's and inspectors' evaluation as good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Thoughtfulness and concern for others underpin students' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They throw themselves eagerly into school life and into the many activities outside. The staff demonstrate their respect for students by listening to the 'student voice'. The school places this high on its list of priorities for development because students have shown how they can make a positive contribution to the school's development. One student said 'a strength of the school is the way it is keen to keep on improving even though it's already good'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership of the school as well as the students are well aware of where the best teaching and learning are to be found. Links are made by curriculum leaders between examination results and teaching so that the cycle of improvement is constantly turning. A priority for the school, through continuous self-evaluation and professional development, is to make sure all teaching and learning matches the best

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum does all it should to cater well for students and the school considers it to be good. However, inspectors felt that the exceptional quality of the language college and the programme for personal, health and social education lifted it to something quite outstanding. The language college provides a very impressive range of European languages as well as those spoken by the members of the school's wider community. Adults working in the department have been encouraged to gain qualified teacher status and this has not only raised the profile of the language but also of the college nationally. Conferences are hosted and teachers go overseas as ambassadors for the college and keynote speakers at international conferences. Students benefit enormously from these high profile links.

All teachers on the personal, health and social education programme are specialists in their field. Two features in particular make up this excellent provision. One is the way staff consult students about their needs and views and build their teaching around that. The other is the extensive use of outside agencies to give students the professional view on many of the concerns which young people have growing up in today's world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Every student is important in this school and there is a very high level of pastoral care that is especially valuable to the more vulnerable students. Meticulous records are kept ensuring the school complies fully with all legislation concerned with the safety of young people.

Academic progress is tracked and recent changes to staffing structures are bringing this together with records of students' personal development. This is still in its infancy and the school acknowledges its methods are not yet tried and tested. Students in the sixth form are very positive about the support and guidance they receive from their subject teachers, but expressed reservation about some aspects of the review days.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher is very well regarded and his ambition for the success of the school and sixth form is a magnet for staff and students who want to come to this school. Over the last few years, together with the very supportive governing body, he has restructured senior and middle leadership responsibilities to marry experience with innovation. The senior leadership team has identified where it wants to go next and running through their priorities is the need to achieve greater consistency in all aspects of the school's performance.

The governing body is ably served by the bursar in meeting the challenge of managing a very large budget to achieve good value for money.

Parents are consulted and listened to. In discussions with inspectors their children agreed with them when they said they actually like the split site. Although it puts a strain on the budget a virtue has been made out of necessity.

Diversity is celebrated and everyone has the chance to fulfil their ambition in this vibrant learning community.

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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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

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 disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
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?	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	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We both enjoyed our day in school with you on September 13th. Thank you for making us so welcome and a special thank you to those of you who gave up your lunch break to talk to us. We were impressed with what we saw and you clearly think very highly of your school because one of you said it was the best school in Sheffield. Some of you travel a long distance each day so you must think so!

The things that particularly stood out for us were:

- your mature attitude and commitment to a healthy lifestyle
- the excellent curriculum that gives you many openings in languages and personal development
- your very strong links with the local and international community and the volunteering and fund-raising you do.

There are few things we have asked the headteacher and governors to do and it's worth saying that you told us of some of these:

- ensure greater consistency in the way departments monitor your progress and develop teaching
- ensure all students in Key Stage 4 make good progress
- ensure all students in the sixth form make equal progress.