

Salendine Nook High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107757
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	309496
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Wilson

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	1350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Spencer
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	New Hey Road Huddersfield West Yorkshire HD3 4GN
Telephone number	01484 657541
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Salendine Nook is a much larger than average school and has been a specialist technology college since 1997. It is oversubscribed and predominantly serves the Lindley and Paddock localities on the edge of Huddersfield. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds, but their socio-economic circumstances are average overall. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is slightly higher than nationally and reflects the local community. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is higher than usual and there are a few at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is also lower than average. Salendine Nook holds the Artsmark and Sportsmark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Salendine Nook has made considerable improvements in recent times and is providing its students with a good quality of education. The clear understanding of the headteacher as to what was needed to improve the school has meant that former weaknesses have been addressed. Through this good leadership and management, many new initiatives have been introduced to bring about these improvements. For example, the development of robust monitoring systems to check how well students are doing has meant swift action is now taken to keep students on track to achieve their potential. The introduction of the 'positive behaviour' policy has resulted in a profound improvement on students' attitudes, which previously prevented effective learning taking place. Consequently, the school is now a place where the staff and students work positively together. As students commented, 'The school has really improved, behaviour is not now a problem and so doesn't stop us learning'.

Previous staffing difficulties, which had affected the continuity of learning for some students, have been overcome so there is now stability in the teaching they receive. Good teaching and learning is the norm in most lessons. However, while monitoring of students' progress has improved, inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback students receive on their work means they are not always clear on how to improve.

Students generally start the school with above average standards. The 2007 Year 11 cohort achieved well in relation to their starting points. They made particularly good progress through Key Stage 4. The percentage of students gaining five or more good GCSE grades showed good improvement on previous years. In 2007, Year 9 students achieved particularly well in the national tests in English and at least satisfactorily in mathematics. However, the school agrees with the inspectors that there is still work to do to improve achievement and raise standards in science at Key Stage 3, as this was a weaker area. It has begun to vigorously address this issue. Through the school's determined actions all groups of students are now achieving well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards are rising; they are highest for example in design technology, reflecting the school's strong technology specialism. Challenging specialist school targets have been met in recent years and are being used well as an incentive to raise standards and improve achievement. The schools' own assessment data suggests students are working well towards achieving their current end-of-year targets.

Students benefit from a good curriculum which effectively meets their needs with a good range of academic and vocational courses. Specialist technology status has enriched the curriculum, offering a wide range of technology based subjects along with good enterprise and extra-curricular activities such as 'young scientist of the term'. Consequently, students are better prepared for life in a technological world.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Their attendance is above average and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students know how to stay safe and keep healthy. They are given good opportunities to take responsibility and contribute well to the community, for example through their performing arts productions and as prefects around the school. Good development of students' basic skills combined with successful work experience and careers guidance ensures they are well prepared for the world of work. Students from minority ethnic groups particularly value the 'focus groups', in which issues are discussed, leading, for example, to a successful 'Black History Month'. The school council ensures that students concerns are heard and acted upon.

Overall care, guidance and support for students are good. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are robust.

Governance and financial management are good, and ensure that the school provides well for students on a very tight budget. Weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, with the exception of the accommodation, have been successfully overcome. The recent trend of rising achievement indicates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievements at Key Stage 3, particularly in science.
- Remove inconsistencies in the marking and feedback students receive on their work so they are better informed on how to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 9, students in 2007 reached standards that were above average in English and mathematics. From their starting points this represented good achievement in English and at least satisfactory achievement in mathematics. However, in science students did not achieve as well as they should and standards were below average. This was largely due to staffing issues which the school has acted swiftly to resolve. Progress throughout Key Stage 3 is now improving. GCSE results in 2007 indicate that standards were also above average, and that the percentage of students gaining five or more good grades increased considerably from previous years, exceeding the challenging targets set. The current Year 11 students are achieving well and assessment information indicates that they are on course to reach higher standards. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English achieve well because of the good, focused support they receive. Challenging targets for the specialist subjects over the last three years have been met. The impact of the technology status is reflected in the high standards achieved in technology subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Their cultural and social development are particularly strong, with students deriving great benefit from participating in visits and competitions. However, their spiritual awareness is not as strong as it could be, with opportunities for development missed. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good because the new system of rewards and sanctions ensures a consistent approach which students understand and adhere to. Attendance is above average as a result of absences being rigorously checked and swift action taken. Most students enjoy school with many of them taking part in the wide range of music and drama productions. They feel safe because pastoral staff have a good knowledge of their needs and support them well. Students adopt healthy lifestyles through participating in sporting activities and gaining useful health related advice from the 'drop-in centre'. They make good contributions to the school community and develop positive relationships with others through involvement in the school council and charity fund-raising activities. Students' self-confidence and decision making skills are effectively developed through the helpful work experience and enterprise programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, resulting in good learning and progress. Teachers have positive relationships with their students and consequently, behaviour is good. Most lessons are well planned and challenging with appropriate tasks matched to students' needs. The atmosphere in the vast majority of lessons is calm and businesslike because students know that they are there to learn; they are eager and concentrate well. Classroom assistants provide strong support, especially for students with learning difficulties. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teaching is clear and confident, as a result. Lessons are generally well paced, which ensures that students remain motivated and alert. However, the marking of work is variable. The best examples give encouragement, identifying what has been done well and indicating how work can be improved so students can reach their targets or the next level. Marking is least effective when it gives little or no guidance for improvement and so students remain unclear how to progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is well adapted to meet the needs of most students. However, the provision for the minority of students who become disaffected needs further development. The school makes good use of its specialist technology status to provide well for work-related learning, enterprise and citizenship. In the spirit of the specialism all students study technology and some take triple science. Drama and media studies are also well established subjects. Students say how much they enjoy the lessons on offer. The good range of academic and vocational courses enables students to make a successful transition to numerous post-16 destinations. Through the technology specialism the school is able to support its associated primary schools in the development of mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), technology and science in order to extend their learning and underpin successful transition to Salendine Nook. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including some examination courses, enriches the curriculum further and is highly valued by students. There is good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for students are good. Child protection systems are in place and safety checks meet requirements. There is good individual care and support through pastoral teams working well with external agencies. Good links with associated primary schools ensure that new students in Year 7 settle in quickly. Students' personal and social education has been improved by the introduction of a dedicated team of teachers which shares resources and ideas. The programme of careers education benefits from a close partnership with the Connexions service and serves students well. The monitoring of students' academic progress is developing well, but there is inconsistency in the day-to-day marking and quality of advice given to students on how to improve their work. There is good support for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities because of the effective liaison between the additional needs department and other staff in subject areas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership for the school and is well supported by the leadership team. Governors support the school well in the drive towards improvement and challenge rigorously where necessary. The school's clear focus on raising standards is resulting in significant improvements in students' progress. The school makes good use of suitably challenging targets to raise standards and almost all have been met. A major factor underpinning this improvement has been the introduction of the 'positive behaviour' policy. Better behaviour in lessons has enabled learning to be more effective. Hence there has been a reduction in staff absence and an improvement in the continuity of teaching experienced by many students.

The school's self-evaluation is good and strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. Weaknesses are dealt with determinedly and consequently, improvement is brought about swiftly. The system of departmental reviews is constantly being refined and is now a valuable tool involving heads of department as well as senior leaders. As a result of these reviews the school has now started to make better use of assessment data to ensure the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the various groups.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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
How well 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 the learners' needs?	2
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

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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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
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

Inspection of Salendine Nook High School, Huddersfield, HD3 4GN

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for the help you gave us during the inspection of your school. I would also like to share with you what we agreed upon about your school.

When we spoke with you we were told how much the school has improved recently. We agree with you, it has. Salendine Nook is now a good school and is providing you with a good education.

The leadership and management of the school are good. They have worked hard to improve the school and are continuing to do so. As a result of this, you are reaching above average standards and now making good achievement. However, progress at Key Stage 3 is less strong, particularly in science.

The personal development you make in the school is good and you attend well. Most of you behave well showing respect to each other and to staff. You were very clear when you told us how much impact the 'positive behaviour' has had on improving behaviour. Consequently, the school is now a happier place for you all.

The overall good progress you are now making comes from the good teaching you receive. Your teachers help you learn well and most of you enjoy learning. A good curriculum is provided for you with a good range of academic and work-related courses, as well as many extra-curricular activities. The school's technology specialism helps you develop important skills for later life.

The school provides good, strong care and support for you in your learning. To help your school continue improving we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- help you to do better at Key Stage 3, particularly in science
- improve the marking and feedback on your work so you know how to improve.

You can help by checking how well you are doing and what you have to improve with your teachers and letting them know where you feel you have gaps in your learning.

Best wishes for the future.