

Wickersley School and Sports College

Bawtry Road, Wickersley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S66 1JL

Inspection dates 18–19 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Ambitious leadership and extremely skilled and dedicated staff have ensured that the school's high performance has been sustained since the last inspection.
- Securing success for each individual student is at the heart of all aspects of the school's work.
- All groups of students make rapid progress during their time in the school and standards are well above the national average.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic; their determination to secure the best possible outcomes for all students is unwavering.
- Non-teaching support staff make an invaluable contribution to the achievement and well-being of students.
- Students behave themselves extremely well and show high levels of respect for staff and each other.
- The sixth form is outstanding and highly successful in helping students to move on to higher education, training or employment.
- Faculty leaders are relentless in their drive to bring about further improvement in their subject areas.
- A strong focus by leaders on the professional development of staff is a key factor in maintaining high quality teaching, student support and leadership.
- The curriculum is tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of students very well. The rich variety of extra-curricular activity has a very positive impact on students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- The school makes an extensive contribution towards school improvement in the locality and beyond.
- Governors are steadfast in holding leaders to account and supporting the school's further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 part lessons including several jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors met with a group of students from each year group and talked informally with others in lessons and around the school. An inspector also listened to a group of Year 7 students read.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body, groups of teachers and a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised including the school’s improvement plan, evidence about the work of the governing body, data relating to students’ attainment and progress, and records of students’ behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire, Parent View, and 121 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Katrina Gueli, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Helen Lane	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector
Wendy Bradford	Additional Inspector
Pauline Pitman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Wickersley is a much larger-than-average secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families or those looked after by the local authority) is below average.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below average. Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for hearing-impaired students.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision for part of each week. The school uses Morthyng training centre, Swinton Lock and Get Sorted.
- The school meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher currently has an additional role as the executive headteacher of another secondary school in the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all students develop highly effective independent learning skills as they progress through the school to further increase their achievements, particularly in their post-16 studies and beyond.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Students enter the school with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average. By the end of Year 11 attainment is high. In 2013, standards in the school rose compared with 2012 and 84% of students gained five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics.
- Students with high prior attainment achieve very well. In 2012, the proportion of students reaching the highest grades was above the national average for many subjects.
- The proportion of students making expected progress and the proportion making better than expected progress is high compared with national figures. This very effective learning across almost all subjects ensures students are very well prepared for progression onto the next stage of their education or training.
- Students who enter the school with literacy and numeracy skills that are below those expected for their age receive swift and effective additional support, including that funded through the Year 7 catch-up funding, that enables them to catch-up with their peers quickly.
- Reading is actively promoted across the school and the library is well-used. Students who find reading difficult are identified early and benefit from extra help to boost their skills and confidence.
- The very small proportion of students who attend part-time, off-site learning make similarly strong progress to their peers in their GCSE qualifications. Almost all students in the school gained at least five A* to C grades at GCSE.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, including hearing-impaired students, make outstanding progress relative to their starting points. This is because teaching is well matched to their needs and the provision to help them overcome individual barriers to learning is extensive, highly personalised and effective.
- The school's pupil premium funding is targeted effectively to enable the students it is intended to support to achieve as well as others in the school. As a result, students supported through this funding make similarly rapid progress and gaps between their attainment and that of others in the school are being successfully narrowed over time. However, their attainment remains about one grade below that of their peers in English and mathematics and leaders are acutely aware that their progress must accelerate further to fully overcome their lower starting points on entry to the school.
- The school uses early entry to GCSE in mathematics and French. This is used very effectively to secure high attainment in mathematics. However, although many students gain a GCSE qualification in French at the end of Year 9, leaders recognise that further adjustments need to be made to ensure all students, particularly gifted linguists, achieve the highest possible grade by the end of Key Stage 4.
- The inclusive and supportive sixth form enables students to thrive and achieve highly. There is a strong trend of improvement in the proportion of students gaining the grades A* to B and the number of students successfully gaining places at one of the Russell group of universities is increasing year on year.
- Although achievement overall is outstanding, some students need to develop their independent learning skills further to enable them to reach even higher standards in their post-16 studies and beyond.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- High quality teaching over time is having a remarkable impact on students' progress, including in the key areas of English and mathematics.
- Outstanding teaching is widely evident across the school.

- There are many aspects of teachers' practice that facilitate brisk learning in lessons. These include: strong subject knowledge; skilful checking of students' understanding and careful adjusting of teaching in response; the use of high-quality questioning to challenge students to develop their thinking further and the thoughtful selection of resources and teaching approaches that inspire and interest students.
- Approaches to learning, although equally effective, were less inspiring in a few of the sixth-form lessons observed.
- Aspirational attainment targets translate into high teacher expectations for students and an ambitious level of challenge in work set in lessons.
- Teachers check students' work regularly and use this information very well, along with that gathered from tests and assessments, to inform teaching and improve learning.
- Teaching assistants are well trained, effectively utilised and responsive to the needs of individual students. They successfully help to accelerate students' progress and encourage their independence.
- Meeting the needs of disabled students and those with special educational needs, including hearing-impaired students, is an integral part of teachers' planning. This results in very successful learning for these groups.
- Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing students' confidence in the use of subject-specific language in their spoken and written work. However, the school has rightly identified that spelling, punctuation and grammar need to feature even more prominently in all subject teaching.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Students consistently show an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to work collaboratively. Boys, girls and students from different groups cooperate well and are mutually supportive.
- In lessons, students are confident to express their views or offer an answer even if unsure, as they know they will be shown respect by their peers.
- Behaviour is exemplary both within classrooms and during social times. Movement around the school is extremely orderly and this is a particularly notable feature given the number of students in the school.
- Students feel safe in school and have a mature understanding of e-safety.
- Students have a detailed understanding of different types of bullying, including prejudice-based and cyber-bullying gained through the specialist teaching of the personal, health and social education programme.
- Students spoken to by inspectors, most parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), and all staff, feel that the school deals effectively with bullying.
- There is an exceptionally strong team approach to the management of behaviour and safety. Students are closely monitored and interventions are put in place as early as possible so individuals are not prevented from achieving well.
- Attendance is above average. Effective action with specific students and their families is steadily reducing the small proportion of students who have high absence levels.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteachers' vision for the school and his exceptional ambition for students are unanimously shared by governors and staff.
- Leaders at all levels are unrelenting in their determination to sustain the highest quality provision and outstanding outcomes for students. As a result, their monitoring of the school's effectiveness is extremely robust, evaluation is incisive and honest, and actions taken bring about the desired impact. The fact that all groups of students achieve so well demonstrates how

effectively the school promotes equal opportunities.

- In addition to outstanding teaching and support, rapid student progress is driven by aspirational target setting, the rigorous and frequent checking of students' performance and swift, effective intervention to address underachievement.
- Outstanding teaching and leadership have been sustained since the last inspection through the robust management of performance and frequent high-quality professional development for all staff. Strong collaboration between faculties and departments ensures outstanding practice is shared and expertise is used to promote the development of other colleagues very effectively. Consequently, the school has a strong track record of 'growing its own' leaders.
- Partnerships make an exceedingly valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness. For example, close links with feeder primary schools and an extended period of transition in the summer term are used very well to ensure a smooth transfer to secondary school for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.
- The school communicates extensively with parents and successfully uses a wide range of strategies to ensure they are well informed about their child's progress and can take an active part in supporting their learning.
- The dynamic curriculum is regularly reviewed and adjusted to ensure the learning needs of each individual student are fully met. A strong emphasis on the development of students' literacy, numeracy and communication skills, from when they enter the school, is a key element in securing their high attainment at Key Stage 4 and subsequent post-16 success.
- Extra-curricular activities are extremely diverse and appreciated by students. The contribution of the school's sport specialism is a particular strength. The school's ethos, students' rich experience during their time in the school and the taught curriculum promote students' social moral, cultural and spiritual development exceptionally well.
- Authoritative independent advice and guidance is provided for students at regular points on their journey through the school. This, combined with links with other providers and employers ensures students can make fully informed decisions about progression routes and that their qualification choices match their aspirations and interests.
- Local authority support for this high performing school is very 'light touch'. However, there are close working links because leaders and staff are used by the local authority to support wider school improvement in the area.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to supporting the school. Active links with departments or a key stage and their involvement with extra-curricular events provide them with clear insight into the school's work. This involvement, along with detailed information from leaders, ensures governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. Nevertheless, in the context of the school's high performance, they have a less in-depth knowledge of variations in teaching quality between faculties or individual subject performance. They are aware of the impact of the pupil premium funding and are robust in holding leaders to account. Governors are rigorous in their management of the headteacher's performance and know that staff pay is linked closely to the quality and impact of their work.

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	106955
Local authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	427232

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	2,040
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Richards
Headteacher	David Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2008
Telephone number	01709 542147
Fax number	01709 703364
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