

# Spen Valley Sports College

Roberttown Lane, Liversedge, West Yorkshire, WF15 7LX

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Standards reached by students by the time they leave school have risen year on year since the previous inspection. The proportion of students who secured five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics is now average and is set to improve further in 2013.
- Considering their low starting points students make good progress during their time at school and achieve well overall.
- Teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. The improved quality of teaching, evident since the previous inspection, is bringing about good achievement in most subjects.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good and they behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They say they feel safe and say there is very little unacceptable behaviour, particularly since the new behaviour policy was introduced.
- Senior and middle leaders and governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing and know what to do to improve further. Collectively, they have set the right priorities.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in mathematics, while improving quickly, is not as strong as in English.
- Some teaching requires improvement and a small amount is inadequate.
- Target setting for students and feedback on the quality of their work do not provide them with sufficient challenge to help them reach even higher levels of achievement.

## Information about this inspection

- Forty-four part-lessons were observed, several of which were jointly observed by senior leaders. Two year-group assemblies were seen and two class tutorials.
- Meetings were held with staff including middle and senior leaders and pastoral managers. Groups of students were met with including some who study subjects at other places. A meeting was held with a number of governors and a telephone conversation held with the Chair of the Governing Body. The School Improvement Partner was also spoken to on the telephone.
- The views of parents were taken into account through the school's own recent surveys. Not enough parents had responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for reliable analysis.

## Inspection team

Peter Cox, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Sally Lane	Additional Inspector
Osama Abdul-Rahim	Additional Inspector
John Townsley	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- There is an above-average proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The majority of students are from a White British heritage with a lower-than-average proportion representing minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English in addition to their own language is less than seen nationally.
- Of the disabled students and those with special educational needs a slightly larger-than-average proportion is supported through school action and a below-average proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- A small number of students study part time at places away from the school site such as Kirklees Construction Skills Academy and In-House Training.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' progress in mathematics by providing more challenge in mathematics lessons and further opportunities for mathematics to be used in a wider range of subjects across the curriculum.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching further and eliminate weaker teaching by:
  - ensuring increased opportunities for teachers to share the stronger teaching practice across the school
  - increasing the level of challenge and expectation of students in all lessons, so that it matches more accurately students' ability and secures at least good achievement for all students
  - keeping track of students' progress more precisely
  - providing more regular and meaningful marking to help students improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students arrive at the school with much lower-than-average attainment. They make good progress during their time at school and in 2012 secured attainment at least in line with national averages. Over the last four years the school has increased the proportion of students obtaining five good GCSE grades of C or above including English and mathematics.
- Overall achievement in English is strong and in mathematics is improving. Both subjects are performing better now than at the previous inspection. There is recognition that overall achievement in mathematics needs to improve. The school is in the process of addressing this by sharing more widely the outstanding teaching. Early examination entry in mathematics is appropriate and does not prevent higher grades being secured.
- School data for the last four years show increased proportions of students gaining the higher grades of A and A\* in subjects including English and mathematics, but remain short of the national averages in the majority of subjects in 2012. However, design and technology, geography and French attainment at the higher grades exceeded the national average.
- The school has established a coherent and successful approach to the development of literacy skills across the school. The support for those entering the school with low reading ages is excellent and helps them access the curriculum quickly and make good progress overall.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language make progress in line with others in the school because of their needs being identified early and the support they receive in lessons, small groups and one-to-one support.
- Data show that the gap between the attainment of students eligible for the pupil premium and others in the school is closing. The funding provided for them is used effectively.
- The small numbers of students attending courses on a part-time basis elsewhere make equally good progress and value the help from the providers and the school. One student admitted that, if it were not for the construction course he is studying away from school, he would likely have been excluded because of his poor attitude to learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching overall supports the good achievement of the students. The school judges the quality of teaching to be good and inspectors agree. There was some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection, a proportion that required improvement and some that was inadequate. The school's leaders and managers are acting swiftly to eradicate the weaker teaching.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching in English and mathematics. One student was heard to say in an engaging English lesson, 'Has the lesson finished already?' Teachers have high expectations of students and in the best lessons they are encouraged to achieve above their target grades. In the weaker lessons the students with the most ability are not stretched enough. Literacy skills are well developed. Numeracy across subjects is developing but is not yet sufficiently well established in subjects beyond mathematics. Some opportunities for students to develop their oracy are missed, for example when teachers, rather than students, read aloud text from books and off the interactive white boards.
- Teachers' questioning of students' understanding is of a good quality and helps support the good progress made. Sometimes it does not allow students to develop a deeper understanding and too often the lesson moves on without securing the learning of all students.
- There is a positive climate for learning in the vast majority of lessons. Students are engaged and relationships are respectful between themselves and their teachers. Occasionally learning is restricted when teachers have to deal with a small minority of students whose behaviour impedes the learning of others.

- Learning is regularly assessed throughout lessons by teachers' keen observations and often by the effective use of other adults assisting in class. However, the practice of successfully setting appropriate challenges in lessons, ensuring students of all abilities make sufficient progress is patchy across the school. The progress in learning that students make in lessons is not always accurately assessed and recorded as a basis for planning future learning.
- When the teaching requires improvement or is inadequate, some teachers do not take full account of what the students already know. Tasks set are either too easy or too hard and the teachers do not get the most out of their students. Students do not always receive helpful comments and information on how to improve their work from teachers.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The overwhelming majority of parents consider the behaviour of students to be good. Students enjoy school and show positive attitudes to learning; in the lessons where teaching is good students' behaviour is good.
- Students speak of improvements in behaviour in lessons and around school as a result of the new policy introduced at the start of the academic year. They are very considerate when using the narrow staircases in some areas of the school and adhere well to the 'keep left' rule.
- Occasions when students are excluded for fixed periods of time have reduced significantly. Incidents of students being removed from lessons have reduced considerably and the effectiveness of the pastoral officers and the support systems is evident. Attendance has improved and is close to the national average. The number of students who are persistently absent has reduced over time and is now in line with the national average.
- Students are polite, courteous and inquisitive. They feel safe at school, as do those who attend courses at different locations. The school uses the minibus or taxis to ensure the safe journey of these students to and from their places of study. Students say there is little bullying and the school's data confirm this. Students are aware of the many forms of bullying and they know what to do should it occur. Students know how to keep themselves safe in the variety of situations they may find themselves, including when using modern technologies.
- There is prefect system in school, which is well thought of by students. Students apply for the positions and the make-up of this group is an accurate reflection of the school community, contributing to equal opportunities for all. Prefects are good role models for others. They demonstrate excellent behaviour and help ensure a safe and harmonious learning environment.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders, managers and the governing body set high expectations of staff and students. They are clear on the school's priorities and have demonstrated a good capacity to continue to improve because of the gains the school has made since the previous inspection.
- The management of teaching is good. The school is accurate in its evaluation of the quality of teaching and has in place well targeted support for staff when teaching falls short of expectations. Teachers' needs are accurately assessed through lesson observations and the management of all aspects of their work. Pay progression is closely related to the effectiveness of teaching. More sharing of the best practice in the school is needed to help secure more teaching that is good or better and eliminate that which is inadequate or requires improvement.
- The curriculum is appropriate to the needs and interests of the students. It provides opportunities for all students to be successful, with no discrimination. There is an appropriate mix of academic and vocational subjects which students can opt for in Key Stage 4. Good attention is paid to promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An outstanding example was seen in a Year 9 assembly where behaviour was excellent and where a number of personal testimonies were given by teachers demonstrating their determination and perseverance, linking well to the theme of not giving up and that 'life goes on'.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school; this is brokered by the School

Improvement Partner who, in turn, checks on the school's performance.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body have a good range of skill and experience. They understand the strengths of the school and the areas that require most urgent attention. They understand the strength of teaching through accurate reporting by leaders and managers. The governing body are kept well informed of the strategies used to help strengthen weaker teaching and are fully informed of justifications for progressions in teachers' salaries. Pupil premium funding is well documented and its impact on achievement for this group monitored through information received from leaders. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet requirements, including the arrangements for students attending courses away from the school.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107778
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	400934

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	872
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Kelly
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Ellam
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 325676
<b>Fax number</b>	01924 325679
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