

# Graham School Science College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121675
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339997
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Heather Barnett HMI

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

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<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>	1310
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr C Coole
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Garry Hancock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Woodlands Drive Scarborough North Yorkshire YO12 6QW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with senior managers, governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies, departmental reviews, student case studies, lesson observation records, staff and student questionnaires and 72 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of lower ability students and those not achieving qualifications
- the monitoring of teaching and learning and how teaching and learning is meeting the needs of all students
- the development of the curriculum to make sure it meets all student needs, particularly for those currently underachieving
- the prioritisation of welfare and safeguarding to ensure all student needs are met
- leadership and management's role in ensuring consistency of progress and managing change.

## Information about the school

Graham is a larger than average secondary school which receives students from all wards in Scarborough, covering areas of advantage and disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than average. The percentages of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities or with statements of special educational needs are both lower than average. The numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The school acquired science specialist status in 2004 and then combined specialisms of arts with science in 2008. A hard federation with another local secondary school, Raincliffe, began on 1 September 2009. The school has achieved a number of awards such as the Inclusion Quality Mark and been successfully reassessed for Investors in People and the Financial Management Standard.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

Graham School is a good school. Students enjoy coming to school and are making good progress in their learning. Attainment and achievement for all groups of students are improving, including for those groups which were previously underperforming. Students feel safe in school and their behaviour is good. They are well prepared for the next step in their learning or career when they leave the school. Attendance is satisfactory. The school has recently introduced robust strategies to improve attendance. The adoption of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory and the school is aware of the need to develop aspects of this area.

Teaching and learning are good and support students in making good progress. The monitoring of teaching and learning is highly effective. Assessment is very good in some subjects but not yet fully embedded across the whole school. The school is aware of this and working on strategies to address the issue. The curriculum is very well developed and is a key factor in the improving progress students are making. Different courses and ways of accessing them have been introduced to make sure all students have a programme that is interesting and meets their needs. Students are well looked after in the school and appreciate that there is always someone to turn to if they need help.

Senior leaders have a very clear view of the school, its strengths and areas for development. There are robust self-evaluation processes. All staff work together effectively to put strategies in place which can clearly be seen to be having a positive impact. Continuing professional development is used very effectively to promote improvement and support initiatives in developing provision. Partnership working is a strength of the school, both in liaising with agencies to support students' well-being and in links with other schools and colleges to help develop provision. The introduction of the combined specialism and the formation of the federation have been well managed and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Improve attendance, particularly for persistent absentees and those at risk of disengagement, by fully embedding new school systems.
- Improve assessment processes by extending the exemplary practice seen in some departments across the whole school.
- Increase the extent to which students adopt healthy lifestyles by improving the effectiveness and scope of provision.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

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Overall, students make good progress. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well. Questioning is used effectively by teachers to challenge and check the understanding of students. The supportive atmosphere encourages students to ask questions and develop their ideas. Students with more complex needs and those who were previously underachieving receive the support they need to help them succeed. This ranges from individual support in lessons to personalisation of their programme. The success of these initiatives can be seen in the 2009 results and current school data. For example, the introduction of the adult literacy and adult numeracy (ALAN) qualifications raised the percentage of students gaining five A\* to C GCSE grades, including functional English and mathematics, to 63% in 2009. The standards reached by students over the last few years have been broadly average with some pockets of underperformance. The 2009 results show improvements in all areas and that strategies to improve outcomes for groups previously underperforming have been effective. These improvements are reflected in a number of key indicators.

Students feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Behaviour is good both in and out of lessons. The vast majority of students conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration for others. There is very occasional disruptive behaviour by a few students but this is mostly well managed. Students enjoy making a contribution to the life of the school and there is an active school council and associated year councils. Students take up other positions of responsibility, such as community sports leaders and Year 11 students act as buddies for Year 7 students, and are active fundraisers for charity.

Students are well equipped with good basic and personal skills to support their future economic well-being. They have a sound understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and some take part in school organised activities to help keep them fit. The school is aware of the need to increase participation in these activities and to develop further aspects of healthy lifestyles provision and plans are in place to do this.

Attendance is broadly average. A wide ranging and well coordinated strategy has recently been put in place, but although this can show some improvements with students who have been persistently absent its full impact is not yet measurable.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Students enjoy their lessons, particularly when the tasks set are challenging and adapted to meet the different needs of students in the group. Behaviour is good, as are relationships between students, and students and staff. Questioning is used well to check students understanding and overall they make good progress. Students are keen to do well and enthusiastic about their learning. However, some inconsistencies in teaching practice exist across the school. For example, there are some excellent examples of the use of information and communication technology but also some areas where its use is underdeveloped. The promotion of literacy is very good in some lessons but opportunities to develop it are missed in others. The school's own systems to monitor teaching and learning show that school leaders have a sharp insight into its quality and have effective plans in place to ensure any areas of less strong practice are improved. The positive impact of these strategies can be seen in many areas such as the improvement in practice of staff that have received support. Assessment systems are developing across the school and examples of outstanding practice include the use of peer assessment in modern foreign languages and mathematics. The school is aware that these systems are not yet fully embedded in all areas and are working hard to ensure consistency.

The school has significantly developed the curriculum to provide a good range of opportunities for students with different levels of ability and aptitude. This includes personalised courses for students at risk of disengagement, work related options at Key Stage 4, opportunities for some students to progress more quickly by taking fast track courses and the introduction of a course to develop more independent learning skills in

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Year 7. There are good external partnerships to help expand the range of provision and the school is leading on the development of the creative and media diploma. Although some of these initiatives are recent they can already be seen to be having a positive impact and are enabling more students to gain accreditation for their achievements.

Arrangements for the care of all students is organised well with strong partnership working and clear lines of responsibility. These are supporting students, especially those who are vulnerable, to make good progress and there are striking examples of interventions leading to the overcoming of significant barriers to learning. Transition arrangements support students to settle in quickly. Advice and guidance are provided consistently and supports students in making positive career choices. The proportion of students who stay in education and training after they have left the school has improved.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	<b>2</b>
	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers at all levels know the school very well and work together effectively as a team to improve provision. Areas of weakness, such as the progress of certain groups of students, have been identified and effective actions put in place. These have led to significant improvements seen in the 2009 results and school data for current students. Strategies for monitoring teaching and learning are robust. A very clear strategic vision has led to the achievement of a second specialism and the formation of a federation with another local secondary school. The governing body is fully involved in all aspects of the school's development and played a key role in the formation of the federation. Governors are fully aware of their responsibilities and have effective links with the school, at all levels.

Promotion of equality of opportunity and actions to tackle discrimination are good so that all students achieve as well as they can and are supported in overcoming barriers to learning. Issues are clearly identified and carefully thought out plans are put in place to address them and ensure long term solutions. Safeguarding procedures have a high priority throughout the school and students feel safe and well cared for. Partnership working is very strong and leads to benefits for students in terms of their well-being and their learning. The school has a very good understanding of its own community and its students' needs and this is reflected in its plans, such as the formation of the federation. Relationships with parents and carers are good and the school has plans to develop

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these further. The school provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Over 550 parental questionnaires were received and these were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. There were some concerns about behaviour, but these were found in a very small minority of responses and behaviour seen by inspectors was good. Parents had positive comments to make about the progress their child was making and the helpful advice and guidance they received.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Graham School Science College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 72 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	212	40	290	55	14	3	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	213	40	255	48	9	2	15	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	201	38	268	51	13	2	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	213	40	274	52	8	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	144	27	302	57	32	6	4	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	121	23	332	63	31	6	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	112	21	341	65	29	5	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	183	35	263	50	11	2	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	182	34	267	51	22	4	14	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	151	29	270	51	26	5	5	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	208	39	253	48	10	2	2	0
The school is led and managed effectively	398	75	108	20	4	1	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	491	93	35	7	2	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



18 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Graham School, Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QW

Thank you for all of the help you gave to the inspectors when we were at your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing the work you were doing. As well as looking at your work we read the questionnaires completed by your parents; they were most helpful.

We think Graham School is a good school. You are learning well and generally making good progress. Your examination and test results have been around the average level and are now climbing upwards as more of you are doing well in more subjects. All of you, including those of you who find learning hard, achieve at least what we would expect by the end of Year 11. Good teaching and a wide choice of courses that appeal to your different interests are helping you to do well. The support, guidance and care that the school gives you are good and helps some of you overcome major difficulties. You know there is always someone who can help you if you have any concerns. The leaders and managers of the school have a clear idea of how well the school is doing and what needs to be done to improve further. The main areas are:

- improve attendance, particularly for those of you who are persistently absent
- improve assessment processes so that you receive the same good practice across all of your subjects
- increase the extent to which you adopt healthy lifestyles by improving the effectiveness and scope of provision.

You have a key role to play here by making sure you attend school and work hard at all times. Your school has improved in many ways since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

Yours faithfully

Heather Barnett HMI

(on behalf of the inspection team)

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