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## REPORT of THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF EDUCATION LEEDS

**EXECUTIVE BOARD: 2 September 2008**

**SUBJECT: Annex 1: Ofsted Summaries**

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### SUMMARY OF SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

#### 1 Benton Park School (February 2008)

##### 1.1 Grade: 3

Benton Park School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students; the quality of education they receive in the sixth form is good. These overarching judgements, however, reflect a broad range of factors. The school has a number of good and some outstanding features. The care and support it provides for its students is good and is outstanding in the sixth form. The leadership of the school are rightly proud of the developments in pastoral care and support to students, including some leading edge initiatives such as the student support centre. The standards that students attain are high, reflecting their above average levels of ability when they enter the school. However, given their ability, the progress they make as they move up through the school varies too much. It is outstanding in the sixth form, but is only satisfactory overall in the main school. Over the past three to four years students' progress has fluctuated, particularly in Key Stage 3. Their achievement in science by the end of Key Stage 3 has been significantly less than should be expected over the last three years. Given the importance of this subject as part of the school's specialist status as a technology college, this underachievement is significant. The leadership of the school recognises this, but has not been sufficiently successful in tackling the problem.

1.2 Students behave well; they are responsible, mature young people and treat each other with respect. They make positive contributions to the community through the school council and raising money for charity. The students have many links with a school in South Africa and have raised enough money to build a science laboratory for it. Teaching and learning overall are good. This is because teachers have good subject knowledge and this is particularly evident in sixth form lessons. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported by learning support assistants and make satisfactory academic progress in line with their peers. The curriculum is good and meets all statutory requirements. It is matched to the needs of the students and has been enhanced through the specialist technology status of the school. The well planned work-related curriculum at Key Stage 4 has improved students' motivation.

- 1.3 Staff care for the students and the pastoral system is good. An efficient and effective programme, praised by parents, is in place to support students transferring from primary schools to Benton Park. The academic guidance for the students is not as strong. Recently the school has, quite rightly, focused on developing marking and assessment. The majority of staff are providing students with information about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, there is still considerable variation in practice which is hindering the students' progress.
- 1.4 The role of middle managers has developed and they are transforming from being solely managers of subjects to leading developments in teaching and learning. In the past there have been some areas of under-achievement. These are now being tackled. The whole school assessment and tracking system allows all staff to monitor student progress, and appropriate intervention strategies are in place and managed well. Nevertheless, the evaluation of initiatives can lack sufficiently clear focus in terms of their impact on student achievement.

1.5 **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

**Grade: 2**

The sixth form provides a very effective education for students who are capable of coping with Level 3 courses. Standards are above average both at AS and advanced level. Progress from GCSE to advanced level is excellent. Those students who began their AS courses with lower GCSE grades have made particularly good progress recently. Achievement overall is outstanding.

- 1.6 Personal development is also outstanding. The most influential factor supporting achievement was rightly identified by students themselves as their work ethic. They fully accept the school's high behaviour expectations, and particularly enjoy the harmonious social atmosphere in the sixth form centre. They make a good contribution to the day to day effectiveness of the school - supporting in lessons, organising fundraising events, and coordinating the work of the student council. They also fully appreciate the opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle. These extremely positive attitudes to their work and personal development are supported by outstanding care, guidance and support. Students say that staff give 'incredible amounts of time' to support them. The constant emphasis on their current performance and how well this compares with their predicted grade is highly motivational, and helps to create a culture of achievement.
- 1.7 Almost all of the teaching in the sixth form is at least good. Teachers' thorough planning and obvious subject expertise give students the confidence to put their trust in them completely. Marking and feedback is very helpful. The level of challenge is consistently high and this, along with some imaginative approaches to teaching and learning, lead to high levels of student engagement. Leadership and management of the sixth form is good. The tutor team works extremely effectively. Strengths and weaknesses in the provision are recognised. There is a continuous programme of improvements to the good curriculum and aspects of teaching, and this has supported a steady improvement in standards and achievement. Capacity for further improvement is good.
- 1.8 ***What the school should do to improve further***
- Improve students' achievement in science, especially at Key Stage 3.

- Develop the use of assessment and target setting throughout the school so all students make better progress and meet challenging targets.
- Ensure that improvement strategies both across the school and by individual departments are more sharply focused on student achievement and in measuring the progress towards those targets.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **2 Crawshaw School (April 2008)**

### **2.1 Grade: 3**

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

2.2 Crawshaw School now provides students with a satisfactory quality of education. The appointment of a permanent headteacher and her restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers have added fresh impetus to the school's efforts to improve. As a result, there is an air of greater stability and a higher quality of strategic direction. The school has made effective progress in addressing the areas for improvement highlighted by the last inspection. It has benefited from intensive support from the local authority, particularly in relation to improving the impact of teaching. The introduction of improved systems to manage students' behaviour and assess and monitor their progress, coupled with enhancements to the curriculum for groups of students with additional learning needs, has helped the school foster a better climate for learning. Crucially, standards and achievement have risen in core subjects and in the specialist subjects of geography, history and drama. The impact of the specialist humanities status, in terms of its provision, results and influence across the school is improving. However, there is considerable scope to develop its sphere of influence.

2.3 Standards are above the national averages, while achievement is satisfactory. This represents substantial improvement compared with the situation over the past couple of years when students were underachieving. Although the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, the proportion of good teaching has increased since the last inspection and this, together with a greater focus on academic monitoring and guidance to support students' learning, is contributing to better progress. Unfortunately, not all staff adhere to these procedures fully and this has resulted in some inconsistency in progress, particularly in English. Personal development is satisfactory and students feel well prepared for their life beyond the school. The curriculum remains satisfactory. There are detailed plans to alter provision radically from September 2008, which the school hopes will better suit the needs and interests of students. However, the school fails to meet the government recommendation to provide two hours of physical education per week for students. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with good provision for vulnerable students. Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some strengths in senior and middle management. Governors fulfil their role effectively and maintain a high profile. The school has moved forward and has satisfactory capacity to improve further, but there remains much work to do. The highest priorities are to promote effective learning and raise student achievement by further developing the quality of teaching and ensuring staff use assessment data

consistently for target-setting, monitoring, and planning intervention strategies.

## 2.4 ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form provides a satisfactory quality of education for its students. Leadership and management are good, as are many aspects of its work, including a diverse and well-balanced curriculum and the way it promotes students' personal development and well-being. Although the overall quality of care, guidance, and support students receive is good, the guidance given to students in developing study skills varies considerably from one subject to another. Standards dipped in A-level results in 2007 and there was evidence of some underachievement, but standards are currently above average and improving. This represents satisfactory achievement from students' starting points. The dip in standards in 2007 was largely because all departments in that year did not closely follow the monitoring and tracking systems during the enforced reassignment of the head of sixth form to support improvement in the main school. There is evidence that students are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them. Retention rates are high and the vast majority of students go on to continue their studies at university. There is good capacity to improve further.

## 2.5 ***What the school should do to improve further***

- Consolidate improvements in standards and achievement throughout the school and accelerate students' progress in English.
- Establish the consistent use of agreed assessment, target-setting, monitoring and intervention strategies throughout the school.
- Equip students with the necessary study skills to tackle advanced level work prior to their transfer into the sixth form.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **3 Intake High School Arts College (May 2008)**

### **3.1 Grade: 3**

Intake High School Arts College is a satisfactory and improving school. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006 and her strong leadership is transforming the school. She has not shied away from confronting any issues that prevent the school from improving. With the support of the governors, the under-performance of any staff has been tackled and the heavy reliance on supply teachers has been drastically reduced. There is a new mood of confidence in the school and tangible evidence of improvement in all areas.

3.2 Standards in the main school are below average but inspection evidence shows that they are rising. Improvements in both the curriculum and the quality of teaching are having a positive impact and most students are now making satisfactory progress. There is a concern that achievement and standards in English are not improving as quickly as in other subjects. Standards in the sixth form are satisfactory and achievement is good.

3.3 Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. The quality of teaching is

monitored closely and there is an effective and well-planned training programme, based on the school's development priorities, which utilises existing good practice found mainly in the specialist subjects.

- 3.4 A more relevant and enhanced curriculum has been introduced in Year 10 that includes a wider range of vocational options. The innovative curriculum in Key Stage 3 builds on good practice from the arts subjects and the skills of two talented former primary school teachers. The curriculum in the sixth form is good in the specialist subjects but does not meet the needs of all students.
- 3.5 There is a strong commitment to inclusion, good quality pastoral support and an effective behaviour support team. Students are well cared for, they feel safe and generally enjoy coming to school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Attitudes to learning are improving and the number of exclusions has considerably decreased. Attendance, however, remains well below average despite the unremitting efforts of the school.
- 3.6 The headteacher, governors and managers know the school well. Their self-evaluation is accurate, they know the challenges still facing them and they are prioritising well. The budget deficit that the headteacher inherited has been considerably reduced. Senior and middle managers and teachers are all united around raising achievement. The leadership team has been slimmed down and senior leaders are now working more closely and effectively together. Most of the middle managers are playing an increasingly active part in leading improvement in their areas. The school is providing satisfactory value for money and has demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

3.7 ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

**Grade: 2**

Students enter the sixth form with lower than average prior attainment but achievement is good and standards are satisfactory or better in some subjects. Students make outstanding progress on BTEC national diploma and A-level art and design programmes and standards on these courses are well above average. There is good progression to higher education and retention on two-year courses is high. Attendance has improved markedly this year, especially in Year 12, but is still low in Year 13. Performing arts students make a good contribution to the school and the local community. Sixth formers also contribute to the school by helping with lunchtime clubs and acting as peer and literacy support mentors for younger students. Teaching in the sixth form is good and teachers have strong links with industry especially in performing arts. The curriculum is narrow, with few courses at Levels 1 and 2, but the school is working with partners to offer a wider range of courses next year. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Groups are small and students benefit from plenty of individual academic support. Target setting and monitoring systems are robust and students are fully aware of their progress and what they must do to improve. Self-evaluation of the sixth form provision is slightly generous and needs to be more incisive.

3.8 **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and improve achievement especially in English.
- Improve attendance.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching.
- Develop the curriculum in the sixth form by opening progression routes for

all students.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

#### **4 John Smeaton Community High School (January 2008)**

##### **4.1 .Grade: 2**

In accordance with Section 13 (5) of the Education Act of 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

4.2 This is a good school that has been transformed through the exemplary leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have established a relentless drive across the school to raise achievement and to improve the life chances of all pupils. Consequently, although standards remain below average, particularly in English and mathematics, they are rising significantly at a rate that is faster than the national average.

4.3 . Highly effective self-evaluation has acted as the catalyst for change and improvement. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly understood by leaders and managers at all levels and staff work well together in teams to take the necessary steps to secure improvement. Good teaching strategies engage pupils more actively in their learning and equip them with the necessary skills to become independent learners. This has led to rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' achievement which is good overall. However, although pupils generally make good progress, the more able are not always challenged sufficiently to enable them to achieve as well as they might.

4.4 Good care, guidance and support ensures that every child's individual needs are met. A highly effective student support and intervention programme tailors all aspects of provision to promote pupils' achievement and personal development. Extended services and increased partnerships with parents have had a major impact on improving the outcomes and aspirations of the most vulnerable pupils including those with complex learning needs. The school has worked closely with families and a range of external agencies to 'do whatever it takes' to re-engage learners and ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to support them in their future lives. Consequently, attendance rates are rising and the number of pupils who after leaving school are not in education, training or employment has fallen.

4.5 The new school building provides an environment that promotes learning. Pupils speak with pride about their school and appreciate the new facilities available to them. Their behaviour is generally good and pupils report confidently that any incidents are dealt with very well by adults. The headteacher has been successful in creating a school community that is united in its aim to be 'the best it can be'. Staff and pupils are proud of their achievements so far but not complacent about 'what needs to be done next to improve'. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

##### **4.6 *Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

**Grade: 3**

Students enjoy their time in the sixth form; they feel safe, well supported and have positive attitudes to learning. They appreciate greatly their new accommodation which includes study and social space. Students join the sixth form with standards that are broadly average. Standards are rising but achievement remains satisfactory overall because of some significant gaps in students' prior learning that limit their progress. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good overall. Teachers use a variety of strategies to engage students and in most lessons, offer constructive feedback on what they need to do to improve. Most students know their targets and their progress is tracked to identify where support and intervention are required. A satisfactory range of 14 to 19 curriculum pathways enable students to opt for a combination of vocational and academic routes. The range of subjects on offer has increased as the school has extended its partnerships with other organisations.

4.7 Good care, guidance and support promote students' personal development and well-being well. Students appreciate the range of enrichment activities that are available although some would appreciate the opportunity to play a wider role in the school community and have more formalised systems for representing their views. Students benefit from good guidance as they make choices about their future options either in education or employment. Excellent provision for students with complex learning needs enables them to develop confidence, valuable life skills and gain accreditation.

4.8 The recently appointed head of sixth form has quickly identified priorities for improvement and already initiated changes to further strengthen systems and procedures in response to the increasing size of the sixth form. However, these actions have yet to achieve their full impact.

4.9 ***What the school should do to improve further***

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that the higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged to achieve the best they can.
- Formalise systems and structures in the sixth form as it increases in size to raise achievement and promote well-being.

5 **Parklands Girls' High School (March 2008)**

5.1 **Grade: 4**

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' achievement and attendance.

5.2 Students enter the school with well below average attainment. They reach standards which are below average at the end of Year 9 and a long way below average by the end of Year 11. This represents inadequate progress. Especially in the middle range of attainment, too many students do not do as well as they could. More than one in five students leave without five GCSE pass grades. Standards in English have declined. For the past three years progress in Key Stage 3 has been satisfactory overall, but not rapid enough for students to catch up with the nationally expected standards in all core subjects.

- 5.3 Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with good features. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong feature of the school. The great majority of students feel safe and well supported. They have opportunities to choose healthy food and take part in many extra-curricular activities. Their behaviour is satisfactory, but poor behaviour by a minority restricts learning in some lessons. Low attendance underlies the weak academic progress of a number of students, which in turn limits their future economic well-being.
- 5.4 The great majority of teaching is satisfactory or better, but the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficient throughout the school to ensure that students catch up with the expected standards. In lessons where progress is not good, teachers do not provide activities well matched to the needs of their students, and this leads to poor behaviour. In good lessons, teachers use a range of exciting and demanding activities to hold students' attention and ensure that they have learned securely. Some teachers set clear targets and follow them up with informative comments on work, but this is not found consistently.
- 5.5 The curriculum offers a growing number of alternatives to GCSE to meet the needs of all groups of students, although until this year not all have led to qualifications. There are good opportunities for work-related learning. Learning about citizenship in practical ways means students make a really positive contribution to their school and local community.
- 5.6 School leaders have high aspirations and are taking determined steps to improve the school. These have resulted in some improvements, including a steady rise in standards and a small rise in attendance. Last year staff absences presented an extra challenge, but staffing is now stable. The restructured leadership team is making its mark, for example on the good provision for the sixth form. Monitoring and evaluation is more regular and robust than at the time of the previous inspection, but action to remedy weaknesses has not ensured sufficiently good quality teaching and learning throughout the school. The school presently offers inadequate value for money, but it has a sound capacity to improve.

5.7 ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

**Grade: 2**

Students enter the open access sixth form with standards which are overall lower than average, but they achieve results which equal the national average across the range of qualifications offered. Progress is good and improving steadily, and the school is ranked very highly among post-16 providers across the region for the value it adds. Every student met or exceeded her predicted grades in 2007. Several A-level courses - notably sociology - and vocational courses perform well.

- 5.8 Personal development and well-being are good overall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The development of political and social awareness during tutor time and the positive impact on students' attitudes and life skills from a wide range of events, visits and contacts exemplify these strengths. Sixth form students contribute within the school by, for example, acting as mentors to younger students and holding a healthy fair for Year 7 to promote healthy eating. They also contribute well to the local community and speak proudly of their work for local charities. Students spoken to say they know who to turn to if they need help, and enjoy their time in school. One student said, 'I wish I could stay here an



extra year.'

- 5.9 Students are effectively guided and encouraged to be independent learners, so they develop the higher-order skills required for advanced study. The sixth form curriculum includes a balanced range of traditional subjects and newer vocational courses which are tailored to their needs. Students benefit from high quality specialist curriculum days and events, which broaden their knowledge of the world. These include religious education days and a very popular debating society, also open to Years 10 and 11. However, opportunities for physical education in the sixth form are limited and some students do not experience physical activity during the week.
- 5.10 Students are very happy about the care, guidance and support they receive. Effective induction is in place even when students arrive after the start of the sixth form. They feel valued and nurtured by caring and attentive staff who focus on their individual needs and develop their confidence and aspirations. They have many opportunities to consider their futures and to make informed decisions.
- 5.11 The leadership of the sixth form is very effectively focused on improving quality, and this is how it overcomes the substantial barriers to success faced by many of its students. Monitoring, evaluation and self-review are thorough. New courses have been established with sharp attention to quality and there has been effective action to tackle any pockets of underperformance. Much has been done with partners - such as local universities - to unlock potential, so that a significant number of students are becoming the first in their families to find their way to higher education. The joint leadership of the sixth form pursues a clear direction and is relentless in finding more ways to do even better.
- 5.12 **What the school should do to improve further**
- Raise achievement in Key Stage 4, particularly for middle attainers, and in English.
  - Improve attendance.
  - Ensure that more teaching is good enough to raise standards.

## **6 Rodillian School (February 2008)**

### **6.1 Grade: 4**

In accordance with section 13 of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to students' standards, achievement and attendance and in the quality of teaching. The school also requires significant improvement in relation to its sixth form.

- 6.2 There has been serious underperformance at this school for several years, and students' achievement has been poor. Effectiveness since the previous inspection has declined. This situation has now been recognised and is being tackled effectively. The interim headteachers have done much in a short space of time. Decisive action has been taken to address directly specific areas of weakness in staffing, finance and aspects of school organisation. Improved management structures and systems are in place. The executive headteacher is giving a very

strong lead to the whole-school community about the urgent need for change. Together with the consultant headteacher, he has been successful in galvanising the school and in securing the support of most staff and students. While much remains to be done, especially in relation to the aspects identified above, the positive impact of work undertaken so far is evident in almost all areas of the school. This demonstrates the capacity for further improvement. There is an awareness that the vacancies for key leaders and teachers need to be filled with high quality staff to build on the progress made so far, and hard work is underway to ensure this happens.

- 6.3 Students enter the school with standards that are broadly average and they leave with standards that are much lower than average. They have significantly underachieved for some years with no signs of improvement until very recently. Because of actions now being taken there is evidence that standards are rising, although they are still significantly below average. Achievement is improving, but it is still inadequate overall because earlier underachievement has not been fully compensated for. This is in part because teaching is inadequate. It, too, has been strengthened. Specific weaknesses have been tackled robustly. The impact of training is seen in the improved quality of planning and delivering lessons. Students are responding well to the changes and are enjoying their learning. Some teaching is good or better, especially in the specialist subjects. However, too much is not effective enough, failing to engage or challenge students sufficiently. Staffing vacancies mean there is not a full complement of permanent, effective teachers. Academic guidance has also improved. Until recently neither staff, governors, students or parents had a clear picture of how students were progressing. A good, thorough system for measuring and tracking progress has now been introduced. Although it is in very early stages of implementation, it is proving to be helpful in promoting further improvement. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good plans in place to develop it further.
- 6.4 The school's specialist status work is another area that has had considerable weaknesses but is now improving. Work within the specific specialist subjects has been the strongest aspect of the school. Here, teaching and learning are good and often outstanding, especially in dance and drama. Results in these subjects are amongst the best in the school. Specialist targets at GCSE were met in dance and drama in 2007, but not in music. The specialisms have had little impact on driving up standards across the school, however, although some recent training mounted by specialist subject staff has been well received by others. Extra-curricular provision in the performing arts has been strong and has promoted students' enjoyment. Work in primary schools has been neglected, with little impact as a result. A new leader of the specialism is proving effective in starting to tackle these weaknesses.
- 6.5 Pastoral care and guidance for students are satisfactory. Students find staff approachable and helpful in dealing with problems. Students with particular vulnerabilities receive good support, and the school utilises well established links with external agencies to help meet their needs. School rules have been clarified and action to improve attendance and behaviour is effective. As a result, both areas have improved, although attendance remains inadequate, especially at Key Stage 4. Students' personal development is satisfactory. Students feel increasingly positive about school and safe within it. Relationships are generally harmonious and most students behave appropriately in lessons and around the school.

6.6 Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The executive headteacher is providing very clear, firm and necessary direction to the school during this difficult period. Together with the effective consultant headteacher, he has harnessed and developed the potential of others, increasing their enthusiasm and effectiveness. All feel more accountable, but supported and enabled to carry out their responsibilities. Most senior leaders, even though several are in acting positions, are doing a good job and having a positive impact. Middle leadership is more mixed, but individuals are receiving good support which is helping them carry out their responsibilities. Governors are aware that they have not been monitoring the school closely enough, allowing a large budget deficit, as well as the other weaknesses, to develop. The new chair and other key colleagues are now working closely with the interim headteachers and others to bring greater rigour to governance and the overall leadership of the school.

6.7 ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

**Grade: 4**

The sixth form is inadequate. The school is withdrawing from the partnership arrangements because the needs of Rodillian students are not being met. The standards they reach are below average and they are not achieving well enough. Teaching is satisfactory overall, though some is uninspiring and does not challenge students to think for themselves. The curriculum, however, despite the aim to provide a good choice of courses, is disjointed. Courses are sometimes changed without notice so that students lose the continuity they need. Teachers do not know enough about how their students are doing in other partnership schools. Students are therefore not given sufficient guidance about how to improve and do not feel secure about their progress. Students applying for university places receive good guidance and feel confident that their applications are well prepared and do them justice. Advice for students looking for other pathways, such as further education or employment, is more limited. General pastoral care is sound and students feel they are well known to their tutors. Leadership of the sixth form is currently inadequate. Current plans to run the sixth form entirely through the school, buying in courses for individuals as needed, are well under way. Interest from Year 11 students is considerable and projected numbers show a significant increase on previous years.

6.8 ***What the school should do to improve further***

- Raise standards and improve students' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that all students learn effectively.
- Improve attendance, especially at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure the sixth form is effective so that students reach their full potential.

7 **Woodkirk High Specialist Science School (April 2008)**

7.1 **Grade: 3**

This is a satisfactory school in which good pastoral support enables students to develop good personal skills. Students of all ages feel safe, and are encouraged to lead healthy lives. Their good behaviour in lessons and around the school is due to the school's clear systems and guidance, and as a result, students enjoy lessons and the wide range of other activities. They make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Links with other institutions, particularly with local

universities, colleges and primary schools are strong and help to widen students' and teachers' educational experience, to the benefit of all. Parents think highly of the school and praise the care it gives to their children.

7.2 Students make satisfactory progress in their studies. Standards on entry are above average, and remain above average throughout Key Stage 3. In 2007 standards were only average at the end of Key Stage 4. This was due to inadequate achievement, particularly by lower attaining students, which the leadership team is working hard and effectively to correct. A new leadership team, which has evaluated the school's performance accurately, has taken well considered action to raise the aspirations of teachers as well as students, with the clear message that every student, not just the more able, should achieve well. Students in the current Years 10 and 11 are now achieving satisfactorily and reaching above average standards. Preparation for their economic well-being is satisfactory. Year 9 students are making satisfactory progress towards their end-of-year tests. Challenging targets have been set for the school and for individual students in all their subjects. As a result, students are becoming used to evaluating their work and seeing how to improve. Most teachers are responding well to the demanding targets and teaching is satisfactory overall with a significant amount of good teaching and almost no unsatisfactory teaching. The positive response is due to an intensive and continuing training programme set up by the leadership team to make teaching effective enough to raise the achievement of all. Some lessons, however, are led too much by teachers without enough opportunity for students to work independently.

7.3 The satisfactory curriculum covers requirements and has recently been improved by the addition of an alternative GCSE science course and the option to take media studies as an additional qualification. Although there are a few skills-based courses, the curriculum is limited to mainly academic studies and does not give a wide enough choice to meet the needs of all students fully.

7.4 The headteacher provides clear educational direction and is well supported by the newly structured leadership team. Senior leaders are effective at supporting middle leaders and at holding them accountable. The systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness are not detailed or efficient enough. The impact of the science specialism is seen in the full range of science courses and in the productive links with primary schools. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve, and gives satisfactory value for money.

#### 7.5 ***Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form***

##### **Grade: 3**

Students in the sixth form receive a satisfactory quality of education. In 2007, standards were below average at both AS and A level. In relation to their starting points, students underachieved significantly in several subjects. The school has put much effort into tackling these issues and recent monitoring shows that students are now making satisfactory progress towards their targets at AS and A level.

7.6 Students enjoy the sixth form. They are well cared for and they appreciate the support given to them by their subject teachers and tutors. The good personal development of the students is reflected in their caring attitudes and involvement in the school community. They are good role models, helping younger students with their reading and mentoring others to help them improve.

7.7 Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, though the quality varies across subjects. Independent learning is not sufficiently developed and many students are still too reliant upon their teachers. The curriculum is predominantly academic and for some students this is too narrow. However, study modules prepare students for their future lives and there are additional study opportunities for the more able. Students enjoy a wide variety of enrichment activities.

7.8 Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. New systems for monitoring students' progress and giving appropriate academic guidance have led to a rise in recent module results, though the school realises that there is still room for improvement. There are good links with other colleges and universities that broaden students' experiences and prepare them for the next step to work or continued education.

7.9 ***What the school should do to improve further***

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards and achievement.
- Widen the curriculum to meet the full needs of all students.
- Improve the systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.