

# Fulford School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121684
<b>Local Authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	359066
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Jarrett 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>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1360
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	316
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Dolben
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stephen Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Fulfordgate Heslington Lane, Fulford York, North Yorkshire YO10 4FY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons, taught by 40 different teachers. They held meetings with groups of students, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of other evidence including lesson plans, school policies, assessment data and case study files. They also looked at all the questionnaires completed by students and staff, and at the 624 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The consistency of teaching and assessment across the school, including the effectiveness of planning in meeting the needs of all students, including those with low levels of prior attainment.
- The capacity of leadership and management at all levels to maintain high standards and to continue to improve outcomes for all groups of students.
- The quality of provision for students in vulnerable circumstances, including those in the Enhanced Resource Centre and others students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## Information about the school

Fulford School is a larger than average, over-subscribed comprehensive school for students aged 11-19. Most students are of White British background. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There are also below average numbers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has an Enhanced Resource Centre for 10 students on the autistic spectrum. The school is a specialist mathematics and computing school and it has a second specialism within the Raising Achievement Partnership Programme. The school and headteacher have been offering support to several other local schools. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was still acting as Executive Headteacher and mentor for one of these schools. There is joint provision for sport, recreation and enrichment activities at post-16 level with another local school. The school has received a number of awards, including the Healthy School status and the Advanced Inclusion award. It is also a centre of excellence for teaching assistants. Students from Year 11 and Year 12 were involved in external examinations over the period of the inspection and no observations of lessons in those two year groups were possible.

**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?**

**1**

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

**1**

## Main findings

What makes Fulford School an outstanding school is that it manages very successfully to promote both the academic and personal development of all its students. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school receives many able students and good teaching and an outstanding curriculum enable them to achieve high standards. However, the school is equally effective with those students in vulnerable circumstances or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. All are equally welcomed and cared for. All make at least good progress in academic terms while developing a wide range of personal and social skills. The result is that students are polite, friendly, very keen to learn, and behave extremely well. As one teacher remarked, they are 'a delight to teach.'

Attainment is consistently well above average at all key stages, including the sixth form. Performance data and evidence from the inspection confirm that progress overall is good. This reflects teaching that is usually good, sometimes outstanding, but also a little uneven in quality across the school. Senior leaders are aware of this and have established further improvement to teaching as a key priority for the school. Current approaches are proving successful as standards have continued to rise and there is evidence of a more consistent application of policy, for example, in developing learning skills such as leadership and collaboration. The most effective lessons are marked by very strong subject knowledge, excellent relationships and well planned activities that engage students extremely well. Some teaching observed was less effective at challenging students of different ability and excessive pace sometimes restricted students' ability to consolidate their learning. In subjects including English, high-quality marking and feedback helps students to plan the next steps in their learning. However, marking in a range of other subjects is less effective in enhancing learning.

The curriculum has an academic emphasis. It meets the needs of the students very well and provides them with all the skills they need for university or employment. There is variety at Key Stage 4, with a range of vocational courses available, and the school makes very good use of partnerships to broaden opportunities for students. A strength of the curriculum is that it is flexible enough to challenge both high-attaining students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The quality of care in the school is also very high. All students are known well and their progress is monitored systematically, with effective intervention where it is needed.

At the heart of the school's success is very effective leadership at all levels. The strength of the senior leadership team is reflected in its involvement in working to support and improve other local schools. The headteacher has established a clear and inclusive vision for the school and developed a strong senior team, supported by an able and thoughtful governing body. Self-evaluation is secure and accurate. There are effective strategies to develop middle leadership, giving many teachers opportunities to share their good practice

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and drive forward elements of the school improvement agenda. Senior leaders have been successful in enhancing teaching across departments. The success of school leadership is seen in the maintenance and improvement of high standards. There is no sense of complacency. As a result, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching across departments by:
  - better use of assessment to plan lessons that meet the needs of the different groups of students in classes
  - more effective use of time in lessons to enable teachers to check the progress of students and to ensure that students can consolidate and extend their learning
  - consistently good marking in all subjects to provide regular and helpful feedback to students on their progress and how to improve their work.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Attainment has continued to improve and is consistently high at the end of Key Stage 4. Performance in English and mathematics is especially strong. The school is particularly successful at challenging more-able students and, as a result, the number who achieve the highest grades at GCSE is well above average. The school recognises that some groups of students, such as some lower attaining students and those eligible for free school meals, have not always achieved as highly as others in the past. Effective action, very close monitoring, means that these students are currently achieving as well as others.

Progress in lessons observed was good. Students are very keen to learn and have high aspirations. Many have a genuine sense of curiosity and an enquiring mind. When motivated, they will often 'go the extra mile,' for example, in carrying out voluntary, additional research at home. They work well together and are highly supportive of each other. Students respond enthusiastically to effective and interactive teaching. However, where lessons are dominated by the teacher, students become more passive and tend to lose interest.

Students confirm that they feel very safe in school. There is very little evidence of bullying and students say that any misbehaviour is well dealt with by staff. The school is very orderly and there is a strong ethos for learning which supports all students. Behaviour during the inspection was outstanding. The school has taken action to encourage students' development of healthy lifestyles but students and their parents and carers suggest that more still needs to be done. Students enjoy coming to school and this is confirmed by consistently high attendance. High standards in key skills such as literacy and numeracy, and evidence that students work well together and develop initiative, confirm that they are very well prepared for life beyond school.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Lessons observed were good overall and several lessons were outstanding. Relationships are strong and good subject knowledge motivates students to develop and apply what they have learnt. In the best lessons, questioning is varied and inclusive, provoking thought and the development of strong opinions. Information and communication technology is often used well to engage students and extend their understanding. Students make most progress when expectations are high and when they are fully involved. In one Year 10 history lesson, for example, students made excellent progress as the teacher encouraged them to make links between recent political developments in the USA, the work of the movie industry in the 1930s, and the Great Depression. Students were totally absorbed as a result of creative approaches that included well-planned group work, highly effective role play involving two sixth form students acting as historical figures from the period, and time for thought and reflection. Less effective lessons lacked challenge for the different groups of students in the class and, at times, the pace was too fast, giving students no time to think or consolidate their learning.

The curriculum is very effective because it is firmly based around the needs of students, enabling them to reach high standards of academic achievement and personal development. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and adjusted. Its design and modification are very well considered and based on relevance to students. The school has gone to great lengths to customise provision across Key Stages 3 and 4, thus targeting

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specific groups of students effectively and providing vocational opportunities where needed. Specialist school provision has enriched the curriculum by supporting the development of new technologies across subjects. There are strong links with local businesses, and other schools, to enhance the opportunities available. There is a wide and expanding range of extra-curricular activities.

The school's pastoral system is centred on a strong commitment to ensuring that every student achieves his or her potential. The strong link between the academic and pastoral provision means that this works well. The foundation of the school's inclusive approach is to provide all students with high quality, specialist teaching, with appropriate support within classrooms, where necessary. Very few students are withdrawn from mainstream lessons. Students from the Enhanced Resource Centre are very well integrated and contribute positively to lessons. There is a high level of care for all students. This includes those students in vulnerable circumstances and those students with particular learning needs who are accepted from beyond the school's traditional catchment area. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are welcomed into the school and there is good communication with their parents and carers. Detailed tracking and intervention, including the effective work of the student Support Centre, enables help to be well targeted.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear vision and sense of direction for the school, focused highly effectively on promoting equality and tackling discrimination. He delegates well and is well supported by a committed and effective leadership team. The skills of middle managers have improved as a result of action since the previous inspection and they are increasingly involved in leading and supporting whole-school developments. Feedback from staff confirms that they are proud to work in the school, understand the ethos of the school, and mostly feel consulted about decisions. Self-evaluation is accurate and informed by a good range of monitoring activities. Senior leaders have a clear agenda for improvement and their priorities closely match those identified by the inspection team. There has been effective action to improve teaching and the school is making very good use of its outstanding practice to enhance lessons across all departments. The governing body is very knowledgeable and has formed highly effective links with some departments. All safeguarding regulations are met and issues of safety are well integrated into the curriculum. However, there are some minor weaknesses currently in the management and monitoring of safeguarding arrangements. The school has a comprehensive action plan for

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community cohesion and there have been effective initiatives to develop students' understanding of the global community across all subjects.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>

## Sixth form

Attainment is above average and, despite a dip in results in 2010, progress has been outstanding in recent years. Retention rates are high and the great majority of students go on to university. Students enjoy their learning and particularly value the feedback from teachers which enables them to know what they need to do to improve. There is a strong emphasis in lessons on independent learning and this enables students to take responsibility for their own learning. The provision for individual care and support in the sixth form is very good. Students are guided well by a team of specialist teachers. Each student has a group tutorial once a fortnight to follow up issues relating to pastoral and academic guidance, together with termly reviews. Students are well involved in community initiatives and contribute to decisions regarding their achievement and well-being. They contribute very well to the safe learning environment in the school through their support for younger students in the vertical tutoring system. They are also increasingly involved in working with younger students in lessons. The curriculum is largely academic, complemented by some applied courses, but meets the needs of students and the local community very well. Enrichment opportunities are wide, varied and popular with students. Leadership and management are outstanding. This is because of high expectations, rigorous high-quality monitoring, and a detailed understanding of what needs to be improved.

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*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	1
The quality of provision in the sixth form	1
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

## Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are very happy overall with their children's experience at school. Most are very clear that their children enjoy coming to school and are kept safe. They are very positive about the quality of teaching and are happy with the progress made by their children. Most express confidence in the leadership of the school and agree that they are kept informed about their children's progress. Most parents and carers are also very happy about the extent to which the school meets the particular needs of their children. As noted earlier in this report, a small minority of parents and carers believes that the school could do more to help the students have a healthy lifestyle. A few parents and carers want more help to support their child's learning and believe that the school could take more account of their suggestions and concerns.

The inspection team largely agreed with the positive views of parents and carers, as noted in the report above. Many aspects of the school's provision are outstanding. The senior leaders are aware that there is more to do in areas such as healthy living and collaboration with parents and carers. Nevertheless, the quality of the school's work in these areas remains good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fulford School 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 624 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1360 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	154	25	414	66	44	7	8	1
The school keeps my child safe	192	31	411	66	13	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	179	29	387	62	48	8	7	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	179	29	394	63	43	7	2	0
The teaching is good at this school	146	23	434	70	25	4	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	111	18	390	63	96	15	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	85	14	382	61	124	20	9	1
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)	140	22	396	63	41	7	6	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	146	23	409	66	41	7	3	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	140	22	387	62	49	8	14	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	91	15	363	58	86	14	12	2
The school is led and managed effectively	164	26	385	62	42	7	7	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	189	30	391	63	25	4	5	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



23 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Fulford School, York**

It was good to meet you during the inspection on 18-19 May 2011. My colleagues and I enjoyed our discussions with you, as well as opportunities to talk with you in class. You told us that you enjoy school, feel safe and work hard. That was our view also. We thought that behaviour in lessons and around the school was outstanding. Students are polite and keen to learn. We noted that many of you work really hard, taking a keen interest in lessons and often doing extra work at home.

You will be pleased to hear that we judged the school to be outstanding. Standards are very high, including in the sixth form, and students make at least good progress. We thought that teaching was good overall, although we observed some lessons that were outstanding. You especially enjoy lessons where the teachers involve you in learning and you can develop independence. Relationships with teachers are very good and, when teachers get your interest, you work really well. The school is working hard to improve teaching still further in all subjects. I have made some suggestions including improving feedback to you through better marking, making sure that you have time to consolidate your learning in lessons, and improving lesson plans so that all of you achieve equally well in class.

The school is very well led. The headteacher and senior colleagues have put in place an outstanding curriculum that helps you to do well academically as well as developing your personal and social skills. You are well cared for. The school looks after students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities very well. With your continued support and hard work, I am confident that the school can continue to get even better.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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