

The Westwood School - A Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103741
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	336146
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Philippa Francis HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	596
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Allcock
Headteacher	Roger Whittall
Date of previous school inspection	4–5 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 19 lessons and the same number of teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of governors' meetings, records of lesson observations, the school's development plans and reviewed 34 parental questionnaires.

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

- teaching and learning in design and technology
- pupils' behaviour
- the impact of the school's specialist technology status
- actions taken to bring about improvement in success rates in the sixth form
- the use of targets.

Information about the school

Westwood is a small school with a small but growing sixth form. It has held specialist technology status since 2004. The school includes an eight-place resource base for pupils with visual impairments. Nearly two thirds of pupils are boys. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is considerably higher than average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is considerably higher than average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average. Most pupils speak English as their home language. The number of Year 11 pupils who progress into the sixth form has increased to around half of the cohort.

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

Westwood School is a friendly and safe place in which pupils enjoy their learning. It is improving strongly; results in external tests improved notably in 2009 to be broadly average. Most pupils, including those from different groups across the school, make good progress compared to their often well below average prior attainment. Results in the school's specialist subjects vary; they are above average in science but are below average in design and technology.

Pupils develop good awareness of health and safety and contribute highly positively in very many ways to school and community life. Pupils' contribution through the school council is exemplary. They behave well, are respectful of each other and develop well personally and socially, aided by the school's strong ethos of developing pupils as rounded individuals. The school prepares pupils well for their future economic well-being. Attendance is improving but remains broadly average.

The majority of teaching is good and is particularly well supported by rigorous monitoring of progress that ensures that pupils learn well. A few lessons are outstanding but the highly effective features within these lessons are not yet widespread in other lessons. In a small minority of lessons, teachers direct pupils too much and use uninspiring teaching strategies. Teaching is improving in the school's specialist technology subjects. Pupils receive outstanding individual support and guidance which plays a significant part in their good achievement.

The headteacher and managers are successful in ensuring that pupils come first. A high awareness of spiritual and cultural themes, well reinforced by high pupil involvement in a range of meaningful events throughout the school year, pervades the school. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are robust and exemplary in several respects. The school has a long history of work to promote community cohesion using a clear and well informed strategy and robust evaluation. Specialist status is used productively within the school and its local community, such as through technology projects with local primary schools.

An increasing number of pupils progress into the sixth form. Standards and progress are improving in the current year because of much more rigorous monitoring of progress. Pupils find the transition from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form challenging and some struggle with developing their study skills and examination techniques. Achievement at GCE A level is satisfactory but there has been underperformance at GCE AS level in the last three years. The sixth form curriculum caters well for pupils'

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interests but does not currently include religious education or timetabled physical education.

Self-evaluation is accurate and realistic and is considerably improved from the last inspection. The drive to improve standards gathered considerable momentum during 2008/09 and is continuing strongly in the current year. Targets are used effectively to provide challenge and ambition. The school has tackled most of the areas in need of improvement, although the improvement in the sixth form is only just starting to come to fruition. These factors show the school's good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good and outstanding teaching by supporting teachers to:
 - develop and implement interesting and creative teaching and learning strategies
 - share good practice evident in the best lessons across all subject areas
 - involve pupils in their own learning and encourage them to think for themselves.
- Ensure the sixth form curriculum supports spiritual development and improved health and fitness by putting in place provision for religious education and mandatory physical education.
- Support pupils in the transition from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form to develop their study skills, examination technique and their ability to learn independently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Inspectors' observations of pupils' learning in lessons and scrutiny of the school's monitoring of their progress confirmed the school's view that most pupils make at least good progress during their time at school. Results in examinations are improving rapidly; the percentage of pupils who gained five or more GCSE grades at A* to C including English and mathematics in 2009 was the best ever, closing the gap markedly between the school's performance and the national rate. Results in English are improving strongly but remain below average. All groups of pupils achieve equally well, the high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve very well in English and mathematics.

Pupils make the most of their study and enjoy their work. Their attitudes to learning in the majority of lessons are good, although in a small minority of lessons pupils make relatively little contribution and are too passive, restricting their potential to get the best out of the lesson. Around the school, the atmosphere is safe, fun and pupils

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have a good natured approach to school life. They get on well with one another and have a clear moral view of right and wrong. Pupils show good awareness of nutrition and the need to adopt healthy lifestyles. Team work and enterprise activities are included in many of the initiatives that pupils are involved with. They are confident and well prepared for their future steps.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school has a strong focus on improving teaching and learning supported by a robust lesson observation scheme. Teachers are well supported in improving their practice. The majority of lessons are good and almost all are satisfactory. Only a few lessons are outstanding; however, the school is beginning to identify and share more widely the best practice that exists in these lessons. Teaching and learning in design and technology are improving and at least satisfactory.

Teachers mostly create a well organised, calm and purposeful learning environment. They use a range of strategies with increasing emphasis on encouraging full involvement by pupils. However, in a minority of lessons, teachers talk too much and do not make the best use of opportunities to be creative and maximise pupils’ involvement and contribution. Teachers are adept at supporting pupils quickly and effectively once they join the school. They keep detailed records of how pupils learn and their individual needs. Individual targets are used successfully to ensure that pupils are motivated and challenged to reach their full potential. Pupils know their targets and how they are getting on in each subject. Assessment supports learning

¹ 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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well and helps ensure pupils’ good progress.

A personalised approach to developing the curriculum has proved successful in getting a close match between what pupils want to study and how this can be offered most effectively. The use of intensive study towards qualifications in optional subjects at Key Stage 4 motivates pupils and helps them secure early achievement. Good collaboration through a local federation has broadened the availability of subjects considerably and is working well. The inclusion of subjects such as engineering, hospitality and catering fit well with the school’s specialist status and ensure a broad technology curriculum, which is helping to support improved achievement in this area.

Pupils receive an outstanding level of personal care and individual support and thrive as a result. Their relationships with teachers and staff are productive and support their personal development and learning well. Staff have considerable expertise in helping and safeguarding vulnerable pupils. Staff engage successfully with parents, carers and specialist agencies in doing this and offer considerable support to families as a result. The school’s work in improving attendance, where it has reduced persistent absence markedly by persevering with individual cases, is a good example. All pupils know their attendance targets and there is a real emphasis on meeting them with strong evidence of improved attendance in the current year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has created a strong and committed leadership team which has prioritised improving standards and ensured a very high level of support for pupils to develop personally and socially, as well as academically. The headteacher is well known to pupils and keeps in close touch with their learning and progress. Staff work well together and share the senior team’s clear vision for the school. Safeguarding is given the highest priority by all. Arrangements are robust and approaches such as the use of individual welfare plans are highly effective. The rapid progress in raising standards in 2009 from a much lower point in 2008 is testament to a sharp focus by both managers and governors on ensuring that underperformance is challenged. Governors are knowledgeable, know the school well and support and challenge effectively. The high emphasis on accurate and rigorous evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning has ensured that managers have a clear picture of what needs to be done to improve lessons further.

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Self-evaluation is detailed and accurately identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation uses data and measures of impact well in many cases, but this is not quite as strong in a few aspects, such as evaluating outcomes in the sixth form.

Equality is strongly promoted and careful consideration of the effectiveness of the school's work across all different groups of pupils means the school is very alert to taking action to close any gaps in performance. Managers are well aware of the gap between achievement in the sixth form and the main school and have focused management attention and revised the staffing structure appropriately. The link between supporting community cohesion and ensuring equality is strong and productive. Partnership work with external stakeholders, such as the University of Warwick and the local church, at all levels of management works effectively with many benefits to pupils. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The sixth form is improving rapidly because of recent much stronger management and a clear and much needed focus on bringing about improvement. The quality of provision has improved. Teaching and learning are good, particularly the way in which teachers monitor students' progress and make use of interventions where needed. Managers are putting in place initiatives to support students in developing independent learning skills, although some of this work is at an early stage. It has not yet had a positive impact on results, particularly at GCE AS level. Students' performance is in line with national averages at GCE A level and progress is satisfactory.

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Almost all students make good use of their study. The rate of progression from Year 12 to Year 13 is high, as is the number of students who progress to further or higher education. Students are involved successfully in extra-curricular work, such as the Young Enterprise initiative and Community Sports Leader Awards. Students grow in confidence and make a strong contribution to school life.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	

Views of parents and carers

The response from parents and carers was very low. The very large majority of responses for almost all questions expressed agreement with the questions. In particular, all responses about the school’s approach to keeping pupils safe were in agreement, with over a third in strong agreement. A few parents disagreed that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, although inspectors judged behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Westwood School - A Technology 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 596 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	38	19	56	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	17	50	17	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	14	41	17	50	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	50	12	35	2	6	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	17	50	12	35	2	6	1	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	13	38	17	50	3	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	29	20	59	2	6	0	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)	12	35	17	50	3	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	15	44	13	38	3	9	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	18	53	4	12	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	24	21	62	3	9	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	50	15	44	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	17	50	14	41	2	6	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 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 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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Westwood School - A Technology College, Canley CV4 8DY

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly to your school. We enjoyed talking to you about school life and seeing you at work.

We judge your school to be good in its overall effectiveness with outstanding care, guidance and support provided in the main school. Your results in external tests in the main school are improving rapidly and almost all of you make good progress. The majority of your lessons are good but in a few the work is less interesting and does not involve you actively enough. We have asked that teachers to include more creative teaching methods to inspire and involve you to a greater degree in lessons. Your learning is well supported by close monitoring of your progress and by setting you challenging targets, which you told us you work hard to meet. A good curriculum and good leadership and management all support your work at school.

In the sixth form, results are broadly average and progress is satisfactory. The quality of teaching, care, guidance and support has improved and is good. The curriculum matches your needs but does not include religious education or physical education. We have asked that these subjects are added. Some of you find the move from Key Stage 4 to the sixth form challenging. We have asked your teachers to do more to support you in developing your study skills and examination technique at an early stage in your sixth form study. Management of the sixth form is improving and satisfactory.

Congratulations on your work as part of the highly effective school council. We were impressed by how you make sure your voice is heard. The school makes an outstanding contribution to helping everyone in the community to work well together and we know that you play a very large part in the many initiatives that go on in support of this work. Well done.

Yours sincerely
Philippa Francis
Her Majesty's Inspector

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