

# The Joseph Whitaker School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122866
<b>Local Authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359320
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Roger Whittaker

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	1247
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Barnfather
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Loughton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Warsop Lane Mansfield NG21 0AG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 792327
<b>Fax number</b>	01623 792419
<b>Email address</b>	office@josephwhittaker.notts.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	359320

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 30 lessons, observed 30 teachers and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings and monitoring data in relation to students' progress and the quality of teaching. They analysed 99 questionnaires from parents and carers, 140 from students and 35 from staff.

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

- How good is the learning and progress made by students during lessons?
- How successful are school leaders in identifying and tackling weaknesses and bringing about sustained improvement?

## Information about the school

The Joseph Whitaker school is an above average sized comprehensive school. It became a Specialist Sports College in July 2004 and a Foundation School in 2006. Most students are of White British heritage, with only a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational needs, is just below national average. The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, and those whose first language is believed not to be English is well below. The school has a range of awards including: National Fairtrade Status, the Extended Services Award, the Full International School Award, Artsmark Gold and the Sports Partnership Mark.

**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

The Joseph Whitaker is a good school. It has made rapid improvement since the last inspection and has some outstanding features. The school is very well thought of by the local community, and parents and carers speak enthusiastically about its work. One parent described it as, 'A good school, effectively and sympathetically run by the headteacher, his deputies and the teaching staff.'

The last inspection identified the need to raise standards following a dip in the school's GCSE results in 2007. The headteacher and senior leaders were quick to identify the reasons behind this and addressed them effectively. As a result, standards were better in 2008 and improvement has continued so that attainment for the present Year 11 is above the national average. Attainment for students at the end of Year 13 is also above average. The impact of the school's Specialist Sports College status has been a significant feature in helping the school to raise standards. This has effectively driven its efforts to improve students' attitudes to learning. The results of this can be seen in improved attendance, which is above the national average, and the contribution students now make to learning in lessons.

The school has a good capacity to improve further and self-evaluation strategies are embedded in its work. The headteacher and senior staff have set a clear vision for improvement and staff have been quick, not only to understand what has been needed to improve standards but also to take actions to improve their practice. As a result, the curriculum is now good, increasingly meeting the needs of all students, and provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has helped the school to focus coaching and training events, and in so doing has improved the overall standard of teaching to good. However, there are still a few lessons where students are not fully engaged in learning because of a lack of activities that enable them to develop independent learning skills. Students suggest that some lessons are too teacher-led and inspection findings show that this restricts them from learning at the highest level, especially in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In a small number of lessons, students are not always clear about how well they are doing or what they could do to improve.

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

- Remove remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics, by ensuring that:
  - activities in lessons enable students to develop independent learning skills through paired and group work

**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

- teachers understand and use strategies to ensure that all students know how well they are doing and how to improve.

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

**2**

Students join the school with attainment which is broadly average. Students at the end of Year 11 reach standards that are above the national average. Over the last three years, the proportion of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE including in English and mathematics has risen from broadly average to above average. At the same time, those achieving five A\* to C GCSE grades has improved from 74% to 89% and is well above the national average. Improvements in the curriculum and in the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics have ensured that standards are now meeting the school's challenging targets. Learning and progress in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. For example, in a history lesson students worked in small groups and used complex information and resources, taking part in a very thoughtful discussion to come to sophisticated conclusions. The progress of individual students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of minority ethnic heritage, is in line with the overall good rate of progress.

The school has worked hard to improve the personal development of all its students. They are respectful to their peers and communicate well with adults. Behaviour is good and students are engaged well in learning in most lessons. They know how to keep themselves safe and say that there is always someone available to talk to should the need arise. Students understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most act upon this knowledge, especially in activities organised through the Specialist Sports status, but they also acknowledge that they need to take more responsibility for having a healthy diet. Students are extremely effective members of the school community and the wider community. For example, they take responsibility well as members of the school council, the sports leaders programme and the social committee. Attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Students have a clear awareness of their career options and are well prepared for further education, training or work. They have a good understanding of the values of diverse cultures and of moral and social issues as a result of their involvement with schools in Kenya and Ghana and the school's 'International Inspirations' link with Brazil.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Very good relationships with teachers enable students to learn confidently and well. The majority of teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects and pass on this knowledge through their enthusiasm and passion and the creative way they use a variety of teaching and learning styles. The use of assessment is a strength in most lessons and this ensures that students know the progress they are making. Careful tracking of progress results in effective and well-planned intervention for individual students. In the best lessons, teaching presents students with manageable challenge and encourages independent learning. This was evident in an alternative curriculum lesson where students drafting a report about a three-day residential course were highly motivated by the exciting task and by the teacher's high expectations. Progress by these students was outstanding. However, there is still some inconsistency in teaching. In a small number of lessons, teaching is relatively unexciting and students are left to simply listen passively to the teacher for too long or are not made aware of how well they are doing and how to improve.

The school has improved the curriculum since the last inspection so that it is geared thoughtfully to all students' needs and aspirations. There is a well-managed balance between academic and vocational courses and a very strong enrichment programme, where the impact of the school's specialism is clearly evident. Take-up by students is good. The school works with an excellent variety of partners who enhance the curriculum

**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

and support students' good learning and progress. However, leaders recognise that the school does not map out cross-curricular connections at Key Stage 3 and connections between vocational education and the world of work are not as good as they could be.

The school provides well-targeted support for all students and this is having a very beneficial effect in ensuring that they take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides. The needs of individual students are known and addressed and, where necessary, supported by excellent links with a range of outside agencies. Effective transition arrangements ensure that when students join Year 7, they do so quickly and smoothly. The school uses rigorous systems to promote good attendance and these have resulted in above average attendance figures.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is supported by a very effective senior team. Together, they quickly addressed the issues raised at the last inspection. This resulted in improved results the following year. It also refocused the vision for the school and produced an improvement plan which has not only addressed the immediate issues but also set clear strategies for further sustainable improvement. Roles and responsibilities were reviewed and a strong management system was developed that had monitoring and self-evaluation at its centre. Challenging targets have been effective in raising standards for all students. The vast majority of staff share the headteacher's vision, understand their roles and are enthusiastic to improve their practice. As a result, the curriculum and teaching have improved and are now good. The care, guidance and support given to students have also improved, ensuring that the needs of all students are met. Students feel cared for and, as a result, their personal development is now good. Assessment data is used more rigorously and better informs lesson planning. Target setting and the tracking of students' progress is also more effective. Thorough monitoring of teaching and learning, ensures that leaders have a clear understanding of ways in which teaching could be improved further.

The school communicates effectively with parents and carers. They are regularly consulted about changes to the school and about their children's progress. Extensive partnerships with other schools, businesses and support agencies enhance provision and so have a positive impact on students' development and well-being. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is central to all its provision and student outcomes. Regular monitoring ensures that access to all curriculum and extra-curricular activities is open to all and the improvements since the last inspection have meant that no group of students is

**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

underachieving. The very effective Chair of the Governing Body ensures that most members know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He has brought about a culture of support and encouragement but also of appropriate challenge to hold the school to account for its actions and outcomes. The governing body has taken seriously its role in monitoring the safeguarding procedures at the school. Safeguarding is good because there is comprehensive training of all staff and governors and the school works collaboratively with other key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to pupils. The school's approach to community cohesion ensures that this is an exceptionally cohesive school. There are highly effective links with schools in England and abroad including a sports leadership link with Brazil, through which a high proportion of students from Joseph Whitaker School and its feeder schools work together with parents and members of the local community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Students make good progress relative to their attainment on entry to the sixth form. There is no significant variation between different groups or courses. The students make good progress so that at the end of Year 13 their A level and BTEC results are above national averages. Students work well in pairs and small groups and often demonstrate independent learning skills. For example, in an English lesson, they worked in small groups looking at specific aspects of a play, which resulted in presentations which were consistently detailed and perceptive. Students make a substantial contribution to the school community. This includes taking on a number of leadership roles, like being 'red shirts' where they carry out duties which help in the smooth running of the school and look after and care for younger students.

The quality of teaching is good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching. In the best lessons strong planning, subject knowledge and opportunities for students to



**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

develop independent learning skills are common features. However, as in the rest of the school, not all activities excite and engage students fully. Most teachers use a variety of effective assessment strategies to gauge students' progress. Students' progress is supported by good study facilities including the provision of laptop computers for all. The curriculum has been broadened, since the last inspection, by the introduction of more vocational options as a result of work through the Specialist Sports College status. The curriculum generally meets the needs of most students but the school is, rightly, aware of the need to introduce level 2 courses as additional options. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Students are known as individuals, given thorough guidance on pathways into further education and employment and provided with effective support if they have problems. The strategic and day-to-day leadership of the sixth form are derived from a clear vision of what sixth form education should provide. There is a clearly focused action plan, which is bringing about improvements in procedures for monitoring students' progress and raising standards.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

Few parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, but those who did were highly positive about the education their children receive at The Joseph Whitaker School. Their views are in line with judgements made by inspectors, particularly in relation to how well the school keeps students safe and how well it is led and managed. A few said that the school does not help them enough to support their children's learning or help their children to have a healthy lifestyle. The inspectors found that the school is aware that some parents and carers are dissatisfied with these aspects of provision and is making more effort to address the situation.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Joseph Whitaker 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	26	64	65	7	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	30	30	67	68	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	36	57	58	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	33	61	62	5	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	23	69	70	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	16	69	70	11	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	13	72	73	12	12	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)	23	23	63	64	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	25	61	62	9	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	27	55	56	10	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	22	59	60	9	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	37	56	57	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	34	57	58	7	7	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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



1 December 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Joseph Whitaker School, Mansfield, NG21 0AG**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school. We appreciated the help you gave us in finding our way around the school. We were impressed with your good behaviour and your willingness to answer our questions. We found that you go to a good school. It is improving and has some outstanding features.

These are some of the school's strengths.

Your results have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above the national average. This is because of the good learning and progress that is taking place in lessons.

You make a strong contribution to your progress through attending school well, being punctual to lessons and being willing to work enthusiastically in learning activities.

Your teachers have improved the way you are informed in most lessons about how well you are doing and what you could do to improve.

The specialism in sports has improved the opportunities for you to take part in activities which help you to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Staff take outstanding care of you, ensure that you are looked after very well and supported during your time at school.

The headteacher and senior staff are enthusiastic and committed to improving the school even further so that you all achieve as well as you can.

We have asked the headteacher and other leaders to remove the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, especially in English and mathematics. They can do this by making sure that activities always help you to develop your independent learning skills through paired and small group work, and by ensuring that you all know how well you are doing and how to improve your work.

You can help the teachers by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Roger Whittaker

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**