

Bristnall Hall Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104016
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355507
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	938
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Tilsley
Headteacher	Stephen Venross
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. This included observing 34 teachers, visiting 36 lessons and observing two assemblies. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, groups of students, representatives of the governing body and staff. They observed the college's work and looked at progress tracking, performance data, students' work, numerous policies and college documents. The inspection team received 230 completed questionnaires from parents or carers and scrutinised questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- What is the rate the progress made by students in mathematics?
- How effective are students' learning and progress in lessons as indicated by the college's assessment data, particularly for higher ability students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective are the strategies used by the college to reduce persistent absence?
- How successful are leadership and management at all levels in reducing the variation of performance between subjects?

Information about the school

Bristnall Hall has been a specialist technology college since 2003. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average as is the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. There is provision in the college for students with autistic spectrum disorder. The college is part of the South Sandwell consortium where students can access post-16 courses.

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

Bristnall Hall is a good college which has continued to improve. This is an inclusive place where students achieve well in a supportive environment. Students from potentially vulnerable circumstances are served well by the excellent close attention the college gives to their needs. Students comment on how much they enjoy college, they feel safe and well cared for. Behaviour is good and the college is a calm and very friendly place. Despite the limitations of the accommodation, students respond positively to the high expectations set by staff and thus relationships among staff and students are a real strength of the college. Students make a good contribution to the college and local community by taking part in neighbourhood forums and acting as senior prefects. Peer mentors support local primary schools through a paired reading scheme and support students who need a friendly face to talk to. Parents and carers are also very positive about the college and comment 'the school supports my child's learning and we are delighted with the progress our child is making, my child is gifted and talented and we feel the school enriches her learning', also 'learning support is good and the school has helped to support my son with his special needs'. Strategies to improve attendance are effective and there has been reduction in the number of students who are persistently absent. There is an extensive range of strategies and of staff deployment to improve attendance and the college is driving forward its ambition to make attendance better than average. However, at present it remains broadly average.

Attainment, while average overall, has risen significantly since 2008. All groups of students make good progress during their time at the college. This is supported by success in English, science, design and technology and information and communication technology. The proportion of students who gain five or more A* to C passes including English and mathematics is improving. However, there is too much variation in standards across different subjects. The current progress made by students in mathematics shows that students are on course to do better due to good teaching and informative marking and students are now catching up with the success in English.

Curriculum provision is good and offers a variety of courses to meet students' needs. There are enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented students and specialised programmes for students with low levels of literacy. The college's specialist status in technology is a driving force for change and improvement. It is helping to raise the proportion of students obtaining five or more good GCSEs and provides many benefits through the curriculum. A notable contribution to the college's success is the improvement in teaching, which is consistently good and some which is outstanding. Lessons are well planned with a range of tasks or materials targeted at specific groups such higher ability students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students know what they are expected to learn. Assessment information is used very effectively at subject and

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teacher level to set challenging targets, prioritise support for individuals and to plan lessons.

Leadership, management and teamwork at all levels are driving forward improvements. Leaders demonstrate a good capacity to improve through their determination and ambition. Staff morale is high and there is an eagerness to do better. The college has a track record of rising standards and significant improvements in the quality of teaching. Monitoring and evaluation of aspects of the college's work are rigorous and self-evaluation is accurate. Plans and actions to tackle the variation of performance across different subjects are well underway but have not yet had the full impact. Subject leadership has been strengthened with termly area reviews to bring all areas up to the best.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attendance rates and reduce the number of students who are persistently absent by:
 - monitoring and evaluating the strategies developed to combat low attendance to ensure they are effective
 - developing and retaining the services of the dedicated attendance team
 - reviewing the rewards policy
 - engaging parents in a high profile strategy to promote good attendance.
- Reduce the variation of attainment across subjects by:
 - using outstanding teachers in a coaching role to support improvement of learning and teaching in the classroom
 - buddying up subject leaders on projects to share best practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The prior attainment of students when they join the college is usually well below average to below average. Attainment shows a strong trend of improvement. The proportion of A* to C grades at GSCE including English and mathematics is below average but on an upward trajectory. The college's comprehensive tracking data indicate that this rise is set to continue. Year 11 has taken examinations early and results are very encouraging. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least similar progress to that of their peers. Those from other specific groups, such as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, also perform at least as well as their peers. Achievement for White British boys is improving and the attainment of the small number of Indian students is above average. The quality of learning is good in lessons. Students are enthusiastic and enjoy the tasks they are given. They listen carefully and discuss issues sensibly in pairs or as a whole class. Teachers regularly check on learning by using self and peer assessment very effectively. Students can explain what they are doing and show positive attitudes to their work.

Students are welcoming and are very positive about their college. In class, the vast majority are willing to take personal responsibility for improving, based on the advice and support given. Students are considerate and supportive of one another. The extent to which students adopt a healthy lifestyle is limited by some students opting for unhealthy

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options during lunch times but the number of students participating in sport is high. Students respond with interest to opportunities for engaging in artistic, sporting and cultural activities. In lessons students are able to reflect on their own and others' experiences and the impact of wider events on others. Students show a clear understanding of right and wrong and the consequences of their actions. There is a clear sense of common values and students show a willingness to work in groups with other students of different religions, ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds. Various opportunities within the curriculum provision and extra curricular activities are taken to celebrate key aspects of other cultures. The students accept, tolerate and respect each other and adults they have contact with. Students are developing their knowledge of the world of work through vocational courses and enterprise challenges.

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	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teaching is consistently good and effective in ensuring that students are engaged and motivated. Good use is made of previous learning in lessons and individual targets are set accordingly. The great majority of teaching is securing good progress and learning. Objectives are explained to students at the start and often reviewed throughout the lesson. Teachers are very enthusiastic and have strong subject knowledge. Technology is used well to further learning. The use of assessment to support learning is good. Students are encouraged to check their own and others' progress. Teachers use questioning to

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make students think and challenge their understanding. There are examples of detailed and regular marking, which gives good guidance on how work can be improved. The vast majority of students understand their current levels and what is needed to achieve the next level. Where teaching is satisfactory, students' progress is limited by teachers talking for too long and students remain passive.

The college's curriculum provides a broad range of learning opportunities, which are well organised and well matched to the needs and interests of different groups and individuals. It is kept under constant review. All students study discrete design and technology and information and communication technology in Years 7 to 11. Five enrichment days during the year offer intensive work on range of topics and provide opportunities for visits and outside speakers. Good links with the local college has led to a highly personalised programme for a few students. Collaboration with the local Collegiate Academy is allowing the college to develop new sixth form provision.

Students, parents and carers think highly of the care, guidance and support shown by the college. Those who are potentially vulnerable and/or at risk are made to feel exceptionally secure in the Learning Support Unit. Students with autistic spectrum disorder feel comfortable working with the one-to-one support in the main school. Those who feel isolated at break times have the Buddy Club and Start Right Club each morning before college which ensures students are prepared for the day. Transition arrangements for students moving through the college, into Key Stage 3 from primary schools, from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 through options and when leaving college are good and ensure a smooth transition from one stage to another. Information and guidance provided to help students make the best choices regarding future courses and careers are secure. There are very effective arrangements for students to catch up with work so that they do not fall behind. The college is working hard to encourage regular attendance for all groups of students and actions are starting to make an impact.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are ambitious and have high expectations and aspirations. This is reflected in the comprehensive college improvement plan. Planning is based on rigorous monitoring and searching analysis leading to well managed actions. The college's significantly improved performance is evidence of the success of leadership and management at all levels. Target setting is challenging and the college continues to meet and exceed many of them. Middle leaders have very willingly taken on accountability for performance in their areas of responsibility. Subject heads have a good understanding of data, the performance

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of different groups and whole college priorities around teaching and learning. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. The college has an accurate and informed view on the quality of teaching. All teachers have understood the need to ensure that work is matched to students' abilities and marking is diagnostic. A well-established programme for lesson observation undertaken by senior leaders and middle managers is ensuring good practice is shared and any weaknesses addressed.

The governing body is systematically involved in evaluating the college. They know the college's strengths and weaknesses and show determination in challenging the college to bring about improvement. They take part in learning walks around the college and have established a programme of departmental presentations so they are well informed about the work of the college. Partnership working is good and makes a strong contribution to the well-being of students and to the curriculum. The college has a positive relationship with parents and carers. There is a regular exchange of information. Where parents and carers are proving difficult to engage, the college has an engagement tutor who visits families. There are clear policies, strategies and procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of students. All adults working with students are appropriately recruited and vetted and receive up-to-date, high quality training. Risk assessments are fully in place and comprehensive for practical subjects.

The college effectively tracks the performance of the different student groups to monitor the impact of its approach to equality of opportunity. There has been a significant and sustained improvement in the performance White British boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The college values the diverse experiences of its community. It has analysed its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context in order to promote community cohesion. It has been proactive with local community groups to establish a weekly Youth Club within the college. Students of different backgrounds work well together in lessons observed and respect each other's cultures.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers who responded are happy with their children's experience at Bristnall Hall. A small minority felt more could be done to encourage their children to have a healthy lifestyle and manage successfully incidents of bullying. Inspectors judged healthy lifestyles as satisfactory. During the inspection, students' behaviour was good and students themselves commented that any issues relating to bullying were dealt with effectively by the college.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bristnall Hall 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 230 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 938 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	24	158	69	7	3	5	2
The school keeps my child safe	80	35	137	60	11	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	114	50	109	47	7	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	39	123	53	14	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	64	28	147	64	11	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	61	27	144	63	19	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	15	152	66	38	17	2	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)	75	33	129	56	7	3	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	30	137	60	16	7	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	31	125	54	26	11	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	21	142	62	18	8	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	74	32	139	60	4	2	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	99	43	114	50	13	6	2	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

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">■ 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.



18 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Bristnall Hall Technology College, Oldbury, B68 9PA

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your college. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about your college. We think your college provides you with a good quality of education. The headteacher and staff work well as a team and have achieved many improvements. Here are some good things we found out about it.

The college is a calm and friendly place.

You enjoy college, feel safe and behave well.

Staff are committed and work hard to care and support you.

Students from potentially vulnerable circumstances are served well by the excellent close attention the college gives to their needs.

Curriculum provision is good and offers a variety of courses to meet your needs. There are enrichment opportunities for gifted and talented students and specialised programmes for students with low levels of literacy.

The college's specialist status in technology is a driving force for change and improvement. It is helping to raise the proportion of you obtaining five or more good GCSEs and provides many benefits through the curriculum.

The teaching is good and some is outstanding.

You make good progress by the time you leave college.

We have asked the college to make the following improvements:

- to help you achieve better in all your subjects
- to improve the rate of attendance of those of you who do not attend regularly enough.

We wish you all the very best in your studies and every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector

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