

# Whitley Abbey Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103734
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	355445
Inspection dates	22-23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Rashida Sharif HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	751
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Stephenson
Headteacher	Lorraine Allen
Date of previous school inspection	16 April 2008
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# Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 39 lessons and 44 teachers, four form periods and an assembly. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, such as lunch times and out of school activities. They scrutinised assorted documents, including the school improvement plan, assessment and student tracking data, school policies and procedures, minutes of governing body meetings and information about community cohesion. They also undertook an analysis of questionnaires returned by students, staff and 36 parents.

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

- The extent to which the school's curriculum and support services meet the needs of all students.
- The quality of teaching, assessment and tracking procedures, guidance and intervention to evaluate whether the support and challenge provided to all students is sufficient.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, especially the consistency of provision between subjects.
- The effectiveness of the consortium arrangements in meeting the needs of all students.

# Information about the school

Whitley Abbey is a smaller than average secondary school which is part of a local consortium with other institutions. The proportion of students with special education needs and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is exceptionally high. There is a small proportion Black African and Black British African students and smaller numbers from other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of students joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is above average and increasing rapidly. Many of these are refugees and asylum seekers.

The school has had specialist status in business and enterprise since 2007. The school gained Healthy Schools gold status in April 2009 and has Sports Mark and Investors in People awards.

# **Inspection judgements**

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

## Main findings

Whitley Abbey has moved from being a good school at the time of its previous inspection to being outstanding now. It is a harmonious school that cares exceptionally well for all its students and particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. There is a powerful culture of continuous improvement in the school, driven by the headteacher, the school's senior leadership team and the governing body. The proportion of students obtaining five top GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has increased steadily each year for four years and is now above the national average. The attainment of particular groups, for example Black African students, has also improved. The school is aware that it needs to do more to improve the attainment of some of the other smaller minority ethnic groups. Students make outstanding progress from their starting points as a result of mostly good teaching and excellent monitoring and intervention strategies.

The outcomes for students are good, with some aspects that are outstanding. The extent to which students feel safe is very high and the support for the most vulnerable students is exceptional. This is confirmed by parents, one of whom stated, 'My son has autism. The staff have been marvellous. He didn't like school before but since he started Whitley he loves it. He has made lots of friends.' Another parent commented, 'I think that this is an excellent school and my children have really developed well in their years at Whitley Abbey.' In discussions students were overwhelmingly positive about 'their' school and how well the staff know them and care for them. As one boy put it, 'They make me feel good about myself.' The highly inclusive nature of the school owes much to the contributions students make. Some of the many examples include the high guality peer mentoring and the students responses to the 'opening minds' programme. Behaviour is outstanding. The school has low tolerance for poor behaviour and there are effective systems for dealing with incidents if and when they arise. Excellent workplace and other skills that contribute to the students' future economic well-being are delivered through the school's outstanding curriculum which puts innovation and enterprise into the heart of the provision. The curriculum is well organised, and thoroughly mapped, providing students with a wealth of highly memorable opportunities within and beyond school. This innovative approach to the curriculum ensures that the quality of students' learning and the progress they make, how safe they feel, their behaviour, their understanding of healthy lifestyles, the extent to which they contribute to the school community and develop their work place skills are outstanding. Students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good and promoted well through planned opportunities in the curriculum and high expectations for empathy between different cultures in and beyond the school.

The school's exemplary monitoring procedures and analysis of students' achievement, attitudes and behaviour to learning and attendance are used to target highly effective interventions. Departmental reviews systematically monitor the quality of teaching and assessment and the effectiveness of the curriculum. These reviews are integrated with

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student monitoring to ensure that the leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. However, the school recognises that some of the exemplary practice in the use of assessment information and marking in books is not yet consistent throughout the school.

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to improve the school so that it now has an excellent reputation. She, along with her senior leaders, governors and staff, are passionate about improving students' outcomes and have robust systems to do so. As a result of these and the other factors already mentioned, the school has outstanding capacity to sustain further improvement. The school engages positively with parents and carers and does much to support community cohesion locally, nationally and internationally. It is not, however, complacent and recognises that it needs to do more for those groups of parents who are not as involved in their children's education as others.

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

- Improve GCSE results further across all subjects by:
  - ensuring that there is consistently good teaching across departments by sharing the outstanding practice that already exists
  - ensuring that assessment practice in lessons and marking in books is consistently good across the school.
- Improve communication with parents, especially for those groups of parents and carers who are not as involved with their children's education as others.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Students enter the school with well below average levels of prior attainment and make excellent progress from Years 7 to 11. Standards have continued to improve year on year. A significant majority of students attained well in 2009, gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, and very well in 2010. They also gained much improved passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics, in line with national average. The school's reliable data show that this year all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, attained five or more passes at grades A\* to C, with a number achieving five or more passes at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. The school works extremely hard with students during the school day and after school to support them. There has been a focus on improving the school's specialist subjects of business and enterprise successfully through the 14 to 19 strategy which involves a number of schools in the consortium. Students are keen and committed to doing their best. As one student put it, 'I like the fact that we can be treated like adults. We can be trusted a lot and relied upon.' This is engendered through the very successful 'opening minds' programme across the school, an innovative curriculum which enables young people to develop their intellectual, emotional and interpersonal skills.

Students say they feel very safe and that staff listen to their concerns and respond to their needs. Students are clear of what is expected of them. Their behaviour enables them to work independently and constructively with others. Students display excellent knowledge and attitudes to healthy eating. Students are proud of their school and make significant contributions to the school and the wider community, for example, as mentors for others,

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as school council representatives, and running the school bank. Students confidently apply their basic skills across the curriculum and have good understanding of the 'real' world and what it means to be a good citizen. They recognise the contribution the school makes in supporting different accreditation through their consortium arrangements and use of early entry for particular examinations. There is a sense of enjoyment in learning about others and the world around them; they socialise and cooperate well and know right from wrong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance 1	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<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?

Teaching is good, with much that is outstanding. In the best lessons, teachers prepare and plan their lessons carefully using assessment adeptly to match the differing needs of students. Lessons start promptly and crisply, and they provide very good pace and challenge to the students' learning. The sharp, well considered questions by teachers make students think, draw on their previous learning and give reasons for their answers. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and their enthusiasm helps to convey a love of their subject to students. In good and outstanding lessons, staff continually monitor students' progress and respond appropriately. Where satisfactory teaching was seen it was characterised by students not being given sufficient opportunity to reflect on and improve their learning through discussion, or where teachers dominated the lesson

Most marking is good but there are inconsistencies, particularly in ensuring that students respond to comments in how to improve their work. In the best examples, marking is

regular, celebrates what has been achieved and gives useful pointers on how to improve. However, some marking is cursory, with comments that are unnecessarily lengthy and no clear indication on how students can improve their work.

The outstanding curriculum has been carefully tailored to meet the range of needs of the ever-changing school population. It is coherent, well organised and mixes both the traditional with the innovative to ensure that every student achieves well. It provides a wealth of opportunities and a range of highly memorable experiences, including visits to the Houses of Parliament and to Hungary, where some students led lessons within a partner school. The school's specialist business and enterprise status is impacting very well on the curriculum, both within and beyond the specialist subjects. All subjects audit their contribution to developing the students' knowledge, understanding and skill in business and enterprise. Key Stage 3 is delivered through the innovative 'opening minds' scheme which focuses on developing the students' skills and competencies. This enables further learning and future study, as well as contributing to students' self-esteem and confidence. The Key Stage 4 curriculum offers a wide range of academic and vocational courses which maintain students' interests. Choices are further enhanced by courses offered in other schools in the consortium, and includes the full range of specialist diplomas. The curriculum remains under constant review to ensure that the needs of the changing student population are met, for example, alternative provision is offered by the Young Apprenticeship scheme. It is further enhanced by a series of 'breakout days' where students get the opportunity to focus on a particular issue in depth. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities with high levels of participation, including the whole of Year 7.

The highly effective care, guidance and support focus on meeting the needs of individual students. The school's inclusive approach is a major strength. All aspects of the students' development are carefully monitored to ensure that any required interventions are swift and effective through very good use of other agencies when required. Where provision from outside is not available or is not good enough the school provides its own. For example, the school recently appointed a member of staff to work with hard to reach parents in order to improve the attendance of persistent absentees. The school provides exemplary support for students whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. Teachers, parents and students all cite many examples of how the school has dramatically improved the life chances of many individuals. The school balances extremely well the setting of high expectations with the provision of high quality support. Examples of the impact of this are in the improved behaviour and attendance of students which is having a positive impact on achievement.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

These are the grades for the quality of provision

#### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's leadership is exceptional in driving forward improvement and embedding ambition. The school has improved year on year; it now holds a special place in the heart of the community. She is ably supported by senior and middle leaders and the governing body who are equally ambitious for the school and work very hard to ensure that it sustains and continues its upward trajectory of improvement. This is because the school has created an excellent climate for learning. Everyone works hard to achieve the challenging targets set by the senior leaders. The school's systems for improving attendance, punctuality and behaviour are impressive and meets well the challenges posed by its sizeable transient population. The school is determined to continue to work on the impact that teaching has upon learning by improving the use of assessment by all teachers to inform their teaching. The school has very good systems in place for monitoring teaching and learning and the on-going professional development of all staff. There is an excellent combination of exemplary student monitoring, with systematic and thorough departmental and other reviews. This helps to crystallise the interventions needed to ensure improvement. Self-evaluation is, therefore, comprehensive, accurate and perceptive, and leads directly to improvement. The school is supported extremely well by the governing body that undertakes its role rigorously; it challenges the headteacher and senior and middle leaders.

The school responds extremely well to the wide diversity of the students and places the promotion of equality of opportunity at the heart of everything it does. The school has robust systems for identifying and remedying any gaps in provision or achievement. There is some exemplary practice in responding to current safeguarding procedures; however, a very small number of staff, particularly in practical subjects, require a deeper understanding of specific health and safety procedures. There is also some excellent practice in the schools partnerships with external agencies in promoting learning and wellbeing for its students. The inclusive culture and ethos of the school extend beyond the school. It results in good promotion of community cohesion and the school uses its international links well to further enrich students' experiences and understanding of global issues.

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

#### Sixth form

Most students make at least good progress with no significant variation between different groups. Examination results dipped in 2009 but there is evidence of an improving trend with 2010 results showing a marked improvement. Students make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and to the wider community through supporting younger students and actively participating in a wide range of activities. They mature into articulate, thoughtful young adults and provide excellent role models for younger students.

Teaching in the sixth form is good and students are provided with constructive feedback on their work on a regular basis. The broad curriculum offered through the consortium meets the needs and aspirations of student extremely well. Students are informed very well about progression routes and options in the sixth form and other career paths to enable them to make well-informed decisions.

The head of sixth form took up post in January 2009 and has secured the respect of both staff and students. The curriculum on offer to students has been broadened significantly through the consortium. This has meant that the sixth form is slowly growing in size. The sixth form has good capacity to secure and sustain further improvements.

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 the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form			
	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

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was lower than average. Parents' views about the school were generally positive. They praised many aspects of the school's work, including the care and support offered to them and their children. All those who responded stated that their children were happy at school, well cared for and enjoyed attending. As one parent wrote, 'I think that this is an excellent school, and my children have really developed well in their years at Whitley Abbey.' Another stated, 'As a parent of a child who has never "liked" school and had behaviour issues during primary school I am very happy with Whitley Abbey. His confidence has grown so much, he is enjoying his lessons and has built a good relationship with most of his teachers and feels both supported and secure in school.' These findings matched those of the inspection.

The school agreed with a very small minority of parents who raised issues about wanting even greater communication and involvement between school and home, particularly to do with homework. A few concerns were raised which were related to individual matters rather than whole-school issues. The headteacher and representative of the governing body have agreed to make even more of a concerted effort to engage with parents who are less involved.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Whitley Abbey Business and Enterprise 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 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 751 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	36	21	58	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	42	20	56	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	47	18	50	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	36	22	61	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	50	16	44	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	39	19	53	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	28	24	67	1	3	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)	14	39	20	56	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	39	19	53	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	33	21	58	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	33	17	47	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	44	19	53	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	53	16	44	1	3	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

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.

#### What inspection judgements mean

## **Overall effectiveness of schools**

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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**). 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:	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.	
	The school's capacity for sustained improvement.	
	<ul> <li>Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> </ul>	
	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.

24 September 2010

#### Dear Students

#### Inspection of Whitley Abbey Business and Enterprise College, Coventry, CV3 4BD

I would like to begin by thanking you all for welcoming me and my colleagues to your school on 22 and 23 September. I am writing to tell you about our findings. We were all very impressed with your behaviour, courtesy and smart appearance from the outset. This letter aims to outline our findings from the inspection.

We found that Whitley Abbey is an outstanding school. You told us that your school's specialist status for business enterprise is making a big difference, as is the working with other schools in the consortium. You said that this made a big difference in broadening the opportunities available to you, and we agree. We were impressed with how well you worked with students from other schools and even more impressed with your outstanding behaviour, particularly in lessons. We found the excellent curriculum and outstanding support and guidance you receive prepare you exceptionally well for life after school.

We agree with you that the headteacher, along with her team, is doing a great job in ensuring your school continues to improve. Your school knows what is needed to improve and is committed to making your experience enjoyable and successful.

We have, nevertheless, asked your school to help you improve GCSE results further across all subjects by:

- ensuring that there is consistently good teaching across departments by sharing the outstanding practice that already exists
- ensuring that assessment practice, including during lessons and marking in books, is consistent across the school.

We have also asked the school to improve communication with parents and carers, particularly those who are not as involved in school life as others.

You can, of course, all contribute by continuing to work as hard as you can to achieve your best and by attending school regularly. You should also continue to share your views through 'opening minds' lessons and the school council. In this way, the school will know what you think it does well or what you think it needs to improve further.

Thank you again for your help in this inspection and we would like to wish you all the very best in your studies and success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rashida Sharif



Her Majesty's Inspector

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