

# Coppice School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124511
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359682
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Potheary

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	22
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dave Humphries
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jim Kane
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Abbots Way Westlands, Newcastle ST5 2EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 297490
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 297490
<b>Email address</b>	admin@coppice.staffs.sch.uk

---



---

<b>Age group</b>	11–19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 May 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	359682

---

---

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 123 4234, 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 123 4234

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 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed 15 lessons, taught by 12 different teachers. Meetings were held with staff and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors observed the school's work, looked at information about students' progress, staff surveys and safeguarding procedures. They analysed 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How effective is target setting in ensuring that expected learning is challenging enough in all lessons for all students?
- How well are English skills promoted across the curriculum?
- How effectively are students prepared for the future, particularly through the courses provided and in the sixth form?

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized special school. A higher than average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost all students are of White British origin, with a very few from other ethnic groups. There are rarely any students who speak English as an additional language. All students have a statement for special educational needs. Two thirds have moderate learning difficulties as their primary learning difficulty, often with associated complex difficulties and/or disabilities. Just under a quarter have severe learning difficulties and a few have profound and multiple learning difficulties. A very few have autistic spectrum disorders, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or hearing impairment as their primary difficulty. A very few are looked after by the local authority. The sixth form consists of two classes, taught on a separate site nearby. The school has several recent awards, including National Healthy Schools status and Every Person Matters status. The school has been part of a hard federation with a local secondary special school, with a new governing body, executive headteacher and leadership team, since April 2009. The current executive headteacher of the federation was appointed in January 2011.

**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

This is a good school. It is an exceptionally welcoming and harmonious community, and students' behaviour is outstanding. Students make good progress, including those in the sixth form, and achieve well in their academic work. They make outstanding progress in developing personal skills. This is the results of outstanding care, guidance and support, good teaching and a good curriculum. Parents and carers are exceptionally positive about all aspects of the school, including how well their children are prepared for the future and how much they enjoy school. The school has improved significantly since the last inspection and its capacity to improve is good.

Students of all ages and abilities, including those with different special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress overall, including in English and mathematics. Almost half of all students aged 16 in 2010 gained a GCSE in mathematics, some at the higher levels, which was exceptional. Students do well in a range of other accredited courses, suited to their abilities, and these include English, design and technology, information and communication technology and sport, as well as courses to develop a wide range of personal skills.

Lessons are lively and interesting with well-planned and engaging activities which motivate students very well. Although the majority of students progress well from their starting points, for a few, progress is satisfactory rather than good. This is because they do not have effective individual targets, which clearly show the next steps in their learning, for teachers to use when planning. As a result, in a very few lessons, one or two students do not make enough progress. This does not have a negative impact in the majority of lessons because teachers have a detailed understanding of each student's attainment and work is planned or supported to ensure that most make at least good progress.

The good curriculum is very rich in opportunities for students to experience many different types of activity to support their personal development. This has led to an outstanding awareness of how to lead healthy lives and act safely and has enabled students to make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. For example, they gain qualifications in sports leadership which they then use to support pupils in other schools. Planning to support English skills in other subjects is less well developed and there are also too few opportunities provided for students to practise writing at length. This is why progress in English, although good overall, is more variable than it is in mathematics. The very strong vocational element in many courses and very successful activities to encourage independence, helps prepare students exceptionally well for the future.

Good leadership has secured a much improved system for measuring and monitoring progress so that leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The federated partnership has played a significant role in supporting this work. This has led to strong improvement in personal and academic outcomes for pupils

**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 there is now a much wider range of appropriate accredited courses available to students which are increasing each year.

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

- Use assessment more precisely in lessons, so that work is better matched to the widest range of students' skills in each group by:
  - giving students individual targets which clearly show the next steps in their learning
  - using these targets to plan work which takes learning forward well for each and every student during an activity.
- Strengthen and consolidate students' English skills by:
  - planning systematically to support students' English targets in other subjects
  - providing more regular opportunities for students to write at length.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**1**

In lessons, students work very hard, are often inspired and show considerable enjoyment during activities, a fact recognised by parents and carers. This reflects the highly spiritual nature of much of their school experience. During a music session, for example, the whole of Year 7 played the violin in unison and students were exceptionally successful in performing a captivating and moving tune. Their attitudes towards each other and staff are mature and considerate. Good overall progress is evident in many subjects. In one French lesson, for example, students clearly remembered how to greet each other and focused very well when remembering months of the year and their birthday months. This good progress is similar for all the different groups of students including those with autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In another lesson, students with the most complex needs anticipated, with excitement, what was happening in a story, helping to turn the pages and remaining engaged for long periods. Without detailed individual targets which change as soon as they are achieved, a very few pupils progress more slowly than others, but this is not limited to any particular group. Students' independence skills develop exceptionally well as they learn how to take care of themselves, cook and travel on public transport, for example. This leads to very successful outcomes for students when they leave school and all move on to placements that reflect their needs and interests. A very large majority of students go on to the most appropriate sixth form provision and a few are very well prepared to enter employment at 16.

Students are extremely punctual to lessons and their attendance is high compared with all schools and much higher than in other similar schools. Their excellent behaviour means that they feel very safe. Students who arrive with behavioural difficulties steadily improve and begin to make equally good progress. The high quality co-operation and good humour shown between students of all ages, when solving problems or working in teams, is remarkable. This is just one example reflecting their outstanding moral and social development. The exceptional contribution students, of all ages, make includes considerable support for national and international charities. Another example, among many, is that students now work together with students from their federated partner

**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

school to audit the provision and suggest ways to improve each school. The National Healthy Schools status, gained by the school, is demonstrated by the high uptake of school meals and keen participation in many sporting events. Students' outstanding personal development in all aspects is recognised by the recent award of Every Person Matters status.

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

\* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

**How effective is the provision?**

High quality, detailed preparation ensures that students make a smooth start to their secondary education and quickly settle, gaining considerable confidence to try things out and express their views. The quality of teaching is almost always good and it is sometimes outstanding, particularly in mathematics. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Teaching assistants are highly skilled in understanding how to adapt work to meet students' different needs and contribute substantially to the good learning taking place. The main shortcoming, in a few lessons, is a lack of precision in using assessment to match work to each and every individual's different skills level. This is why, occasionally, one or two pupils do not progress as rapidly as the rest and sometimes mark time. Groups are set by ability and individual support ensures that most pupils make good progress, but without

**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

individual targets in each strand of a subject, planning is not always detailed enough to take learning forward rapidly enough for everyone.

The very rich curriculum offers a wealth of innovative and exciting opportunities for students to enjoy, supported by very strong links with other providers and within the federation. For example, among many activities, some students learn to play the cello and several groups canoe, sail, cave, or enter for the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Courses are carefully matched to students' needs. The school plans effectively to help build students' individual skills and aptitudes through a wide range of work-related learning and other activities. In English, opportunities are missed to support reading and writing skills systematically in other subjects. Students' folders also show that there are not enough examples of regular, extended writing practice. Work with parents and carers to guide and support students is strong and they very much welcome the use of texting to provide more immediate communication. The care provided to students who need additional support in any way, and in improving behaviour and encouraging good attendance, is outstandingly effective.

*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?**

Good leadership, at all levels, includes a strongly-shared and aspirational vision for further improvement. Excellent senior leadership has been instrumental in improving the school from satisfactory to good in the last two years. Most students in the school now make more progress in several subjects than is typical in similar schools nationally. This key improvement is a result of rigorous, well-moderated and regularly-monitored assessment of progress for all the different groups in the school. The roles of subject leaders have been strengthened, although senior leaders rightly recognise that the way subject leaders use data to pinpoint shortcomings in their subjects remains underdeveloped.

A good and highly committed governing body fulfils all statutory requirements, its members bring an exceptionally wide range of skills to the work and are careful to provide suitable challenge in holding the school to account for outcomes. Outstanding and productive partnerships with schools, colleges and other agencies strongly support many aspects of learning and significantly support students' well-being. As one parent commented, 'My child's experience has been extremely beneficial for his confidence and independence and he has grown into a very positive individual.' The Federated schools in particular work very closely together to share expertise and this has resulted in evident improvements to the education for students at Coppice School. Staff are now able to lead in sharing their expertise on a range of issues with other schools. The promotion of equal

**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

opportunity is outstanding, based upon a very strong inclusive ethos and the very regular tracking of the progress of different groups. As a result, there is no evidence of any differences in outcomes for different groups, and there is no evidence of any discrimination. Procedures to ensure safeguarding are outstanding, with rigorous systems for training staff, and careful monitoring and reviewing of systems. Good promotion of community cohesion includes some high quality work in the local community to encourage greater understanding of people with disabilities. International links are developed well, strongly enhancing students' understanding of other cultures, although national links are at an earlier stage of development. Nevertheless, students show great respect for, and appreciation of, people who are different from themselves and the school community is exceptionally cohesive.

*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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Sixth form

Transition into the sixth form is very well organised, helping students to settle onto the most appropriate courses, to suit their future plans, right away. They make good progress in these courses, building on their basic skills and developing work-related experience and greater independence. The choices are wide, and include, for example, parenting courses, music, catering, and design and technology. Students learn about enterprise and working as a team by running a community cafe successfully, including managing the money, ordering and serving. In one lesson, students worked effectively in pairs to collect and recycle litter and showed a good understanding of the safety and environmental issues involved. They all move on successfully to work or further education, related to their specific aptitudes, or to assisted living placements. The quality of teaching is good, based upon teachers' and teaching assistants' thorough knowledge of each student's different needs. Detailed measuring of their progress also helps to ensure that students develop their skills systematically. Staff use specialist resources and communication aids very well



**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

to ensure that all students can access information and take part. The sixth form building provides a mature environment distinct from the main school. Good leadership has overseen an improvement from satisfactory to good outcomes in a relatively short time, with an increase in the range of courses available. Nevertheless, the school, rightly, recognises that this range of courses is still not sufficiently diverse to be sure of meeting every preference. Staff have much improved the way they use data to identify any shortcomings, and this has contributed to their clear strategy and collective vision for further improvement.

*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

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire and they were overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school. They particularly like how safe their children are, how good the teaching is and how well they are informed about their children's progress. Several parents and carers made positive comments, including, 'The school's encouragement and praise is wonderful', and, 'They work really well and help children with any problems they have.' Parents and carers expressed a very few, but varied, concerns, which were considered by the inspection team.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coppice 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	63	21	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	85	8	14	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	63	21	36	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	54	21	36	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	41	69	13	22	3	5	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	63	19	32	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	56	25	42	0	0	1	2
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)	34	58	24	41	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	64	16	27	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	62	21	36	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	53	25	42	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	39	66	18	31	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	71	15	25	0	0	1	2

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

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

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

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

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

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

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

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

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



20 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Coppice School, Newcastle, ST5 2EY**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Yours is a good school. There are many interesting things going on: playing the violin, doing the Duke of Edinburgh Award and sailing are just a few we saw or heard about. Your teachers work hard to help you, and your work is getting better and better.

Enjoyable teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons and we like the way you always try to do your best. We have asked your school to:

- give you better individual targets
- use these to help some of you learn more in lessons
- help you, more often, to write for longer, in your own words
- give you better reading and writing practice in other subjects.

We are sure that you will talk about these ideas with your teachers and help them by doing your very best.

The way you help each other and enjoy school is very impressive and your behaviour is some of the best we have seen. This is why your school is such a happy and welcoming place to be.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

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 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**