

Evesham High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116932
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	379329
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2011
Reporting inspector	James McNeillie HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	13–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	828
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Grove
Headteacher	Caroline Browne
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
School address	Four Pools Road Evesham WR11 1DQ
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Age group	13–19
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 33 lessons taught by 33 teachers. Meetings were held with students, school staff and members of the governing body. Telephone conversations took place with a representative from the local authority and one parent/carer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation provided by the school, including that related to self-evaluation, safeguarding students, the quality of teaching and students' achievement. Inspectors also considered the responses received to Ofsted's questionnaires from 316 parents and carers as well as a sample from students and members of staff.

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

- Are teaching and other aspects of provision good enough to ensure that all groups of students are making better than expected progress?
- Are gaps narrowing in the attainment of groups of students, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school with levels above the national average?
- Is recent and current progress in the sixth form at least average for all groups of students in all subjects?
- How secure is self-evaluation and action planning at all levels of leadership?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school taking students mainly from the town of Evesham and surrounding villages. The student population is mainly White British. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of students with statements of special educational needs is average, but the overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less than that found nationally.

The school is in a federation with a local middle school with one headteacher and governing body. The school is both a specialist sports college and a specialist mathematics and computing college. It holds a number of awards including, National Healthy Schools status, the Artsmark Gold and the Sports Active Mark. In 2010, it was awarded a Leading Aspect Award in recognition of the work with its federated partner middle school.

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

Evesham High is a good school. Students' attainment is average and all groups of students make good progress between their arrival in Year 9 and the end of Year 11. This is because they experience effective teaching, a varied and appropriate curriculum and are cared for and supported well. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers, with some individuals making excellent academic and personal progress. Students' attendance is high.

Students learn in an environment that encourages and enables them to do more than just what is expected. This was evident in much of the teaching seen during the inspection. Teachers used their subject knowledge well and engaged students through interesting, active tasks and good levels of questioning. Students responded positively to this, demonstrating good attitudes to learning which contribute to their good behaviour. In some lessons, even when teaching was strong, there were missed opportunities to ensure that all groups of students were challenged as much as they could be. Often, this was because teachers did not take into account what they knew of students' prior learning, or did not use assessment with precision during lessons. There is inconsistency in the progress students make in the sixth form, which means that overall their progress has been satisfactory. There is tangible evidence, particularly in Year 13, that this is being addressed to good effect.

As a result of knowing the school's strengths, leaders have been able to consolidate and build on these, for example in relation to the school's specialism in sports, mathematics and computing. When underperformance has occurred, decisive and successful action has been taken to improve the quality of leadership, teaching and, ultimately, student outcomes. The quality of teaching is improving, the curriculum is expanding further to meet the needs of all groups and students' achievement is rising. These factors confirm the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' attainment to above national averages in all subjects by:
 - increasing the proportion of good and better teaching and learning
 - maximising all teachers' precise use of assessment information when planning and teaching, to ensure an equally high challenge for all groups of students
 - extending structured and systematic opportunities for sharing and

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evaluating excellent practice in teaching.

- Increase the rates of progress for all groups of students in the sixth form by improving the consistency of provision in subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average and by the end of Year 11 it is average. This confirms a 'big picture' of better than expected progress. GCSE results in 2011, particularly in English and mathematics, show strong improvement on the previous year, with the proportion of students attaining the higher grades in English rising dramatically. Analysis of these results, and of the current attainment of students, indicate there are no sizeable gaps between the performance of different groups.

Through observations of students' learning and interaction with one another, and discussions with individuals and groups of students, their good academic and personal development was clear. For example, their positive attitudes to learning were obvious in the way they quickly settled to group discussion work in a range of different subjects. Students' ability to apply these skills, and those of literacy and numeracy, to increasingly good effect across the curriculum are also testament to their good learning. Individuals with special educational needs and/or disabilities also learn well. This is not just because of the quality of support they receive but also because of their involvement and access to the full range of curriculum experiences offered by the school.

Students' good moral and social development, apparent in the respect they show for each other and their teachers, contributes well to their positive behaviour. They can talk confidently of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The school's 'Green Team' has established a recycling strategy and its garden provides vegetables for the school kitchen. The school council, and wider student body, has influenced aspects of school life such as the new uniform and recent changes to the tutoring systems. Students are also involved in the local community, for example as mentors in the partner middle school, in charity fundraising and as members of Evesham Community Town Youth Council. These opportunities to apply and develop their personal skills, as well students' excellent attendance, increasingly good achievement and their secure knowledge of what they need to do to succeed, mean that they are prepared well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

2

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Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Students are fortunate to experience much good and some outstanding teaching that shares a number of common features. Lessons are structured well, positive relationships exist between staff and students, and teachers' strong subject knowledge and well-chosen resources help to motivate students. In these lessons, students are engaged in their learning through discussion and investigation. For example, in one Year 9 English lesson the teacher's good use of visual resources helped to stimulate students' ideas about the sights, sounds and smells at a music festival. Added challenge was then given to all by asking them to describe using similes and metaphors. As a result of this, and the paired discussion and effective questioning that followed, students made good progress. Where teaching is less effective teachers do not challenge students as skilfully, often due to less precise use of assessment when planning lessons or to not using assessment as effectively during lessons.

The school's curriculum provides good breadth and has been adapted well to suit the needs of students. The impact of the school's specialisms is clear in the improving and sometimes excellent outcomes in these subjects, but also across the curriculum. Strengths of the curriculum include opportunities for students to study two languages, a range of vocational courses and a selection of subjects within the performing arts. A strong focus on increasing the application of basic skills across the curriculum is having a clear impact on students' rising attainment. Many students participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities offered.

All groups of students are given good quality care and guidance including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. This results in students feeling safe and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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supported at school. Transition arrangements between key stages and on entry to and exit from the school are good and help to reduce potential stress. Effective information, advice and guidance help students to make informed choices about their next steps. Students who may become disaffected are well supported through the involvement of a range of agencies and through targeted support that has a positive impact on their engagement and progress.

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?

Leaders have set a clear and precise vision for the future of the school; the vast majority of staff who responded to Ofsted's survey share this vision. Morale is high, with all respondents stating they are proud to be members of the school. The federation now means that most leaders share responsibilities across the two schools and with that has come an understanding that while it will be hard work, it is already having an impact on students' outcomes. Senior and middle leaders have improved the quality of teaching as a result of monitoring and well-targeted professional training. Structures exist to share good practice in teaching and opportunities to extend this are planned for. Where improvement is needed, teachers and teams are supported and enabled to improve. The impact of leaders and teachers working together can be seen in the sharp rise in 2011 of students' attainment in GCSE English. The school tracks the achievement and well-being of all groups of students to ensure good equality of opportunity and leaders intervene when necessary. The impact of this is evident in the narrowing of gaps in the attainment of the higher attaining students in this school and those nationally and similarly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Few students do not go on to education, employment or training when they leave school. Positive encouragement for both boys and girls to take the range of subjects available to them is just one of the ways in which the school tackles any potential discrimination.

Parents and carers are involved in decision-making processes, such as in joining staff when they visited other schools to investigate the introduction of a vertical tutoring system. Some parents and carers told inspectors they would like to have their views listened to more. The headteacher and members of the governing body are extending the means by which this information can be sought and acted upon. Partnerships with other educational establishments, local businesses and a range of external agencies, such as educational welfare, have a demonstrable impact on the school's ability to meet the needs of its students. The school has good policies,

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procedures and practices to keep students safe and leaders monitor and evaluate these well. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the school's work, hold the school to account well and sensitively. In the previous academic year, the curriculum committee reviewed 'raising attainment plans' for different subjects on at least a termly basis. The school community itself is cohesive and there are very strong links with the local community, not least with the federated middle school. Students have an understanding of the international community through good links with schools in India and Spain. However, there are more limited opportunities for them to gain first-hand experience and understanding of life in multicultural Britain.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Over time, students have made satisfactory progress in this key stage. Results in 2011 and current progress, as observed in lessons, confirm that the progress students make is improving, particularly in Year 13. There remains, however, some variation between subjects. The many strong student outcomes evident in the main school also apply to the sixth form. Students feel safe, and receive good quality academic and personal advice. Sixth form students mentor younger students in the partner middle school and make a range of good contributions to the school and wider community. Some good and outstanding teaching was observed as part of the inspection and this matches the school's own records of an improving quality of teaching. However, teaching remains satisfactory because of the variation that exists and the impact this has on students' progress. The inclusive ethos of the school extends very much to this key stage. Students who otherwise may have left education, stay on into the sixth form and do well as a result of the increasing range of courses available to them. This is one example of how the good quality of the curriculum is having a positive impact on improving progress overall. Leaders know

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the strengths and development needs of the sixth form well, although were over-generous in some of their internal judgements. As a result of this knowledge and a more strategic approach to developing the sixth form, outcomes are improving. This indicates there is good capacity to improve.

These are the grades for the sixth form

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

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's questionnaire confirmed that they were happy with their children's experience at the school. Their views, including that the school is a safe environment, that students enjoy school and that the school is led and managed effectively, matched the inspection evidence. A small minority of parents and carers raised concerns about students' behaviour and how the school deals with bullying. Inspectors investigated these concerns thoroughly. They took into account the first-hand evidence observed during the inspection, including observing and speaking to groups of students in lessons, meetings and around the site, and considered the documentary evidence supplied by the school. The evidence was convincing and enabled inspectors to be secure that behaviour was good and that any incidents of bullying were dealt with effectively. Some parents and carers also commented that they would like the school to take more account of their concerns and help them to support their child's learning. School leaders, including the governing body, valued this feedback.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Evesham High 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 316 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 828 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	20	226	72	19	6	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	55	17	233	74	11	3	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	71	22	198	63	22	7	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	21	191	60	26	8	4	1
The teaching is good at this school	60	19	210	66	15	5	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	14	187	59	41	13	7	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	11	221	70	31	10	1	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)	62	20	202	64	20	6	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	18	201	64	30	9	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	14	199	63	31	10	9	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	9	206	65	29	9	7	2
The school is led and managed effectively	84	27	186	59	17	5	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	26	194	61	15	5	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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"> ■ 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Evesham High School, Evesham, WR11 1DQ

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school.

Your school is a good one. This is because the large majority of you make good progress between Years 9 and 11. You make this better than expected progress because the teaching you experience is good, and some is outstanding. Those of you who study in the sixth form make satisfactory progress overall, but this is increasing. The school has planned a curriculum that meets your needs and gives you plenty of opportunities to develop your academic and personal skills. You told us that Ms Browne and her team help you and care about you. We agree with you. We also agree that your school leaders are doing a good job.

An important reason why Evesham High is a good school is because of you, the students. You get on well with each other and with your teachers and show really positive attitudes to learning. We were particularly impressed with how well the vast majority of you settled to work quickly in lessons and took part in group and paired discussion. Your attendance is excellent and has improved since the last time Ofsted visited. Well done!

We have asked the school to work on improving the results you get at the end of Year 11 and the end of Year 13, so that these are above national averages in all subjects. One way we have suggested the school can do this is by encouraging teachers to share their good practice more, so that all of them can be as good as the best. Another suggestion is for teachers to make sure they use all the information available to them about the knowledge and skills you already have when they plan lessons and while they are teaching you. This will mean that they can challenge all of you to learn more. You can help by responding positively to this increased challenge. You can also help your school improve further by continuing to make the positive contributions you do.

Yours sincerely

James McNeillie
Her Majesty's Inspector

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