

# The Sholing Technology College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116451
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	379260
<b>Inspection dates</b>	05–06 October 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Russell HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1029
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Kimpton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms K Dagwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	Middle Road Sholing Southampton SO19 8PH
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Thirty eight lessons were observed, taught by 38 teachers. Meetings were held with students, staff and governors, and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the college's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation as well as 180 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

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

- The current quality of teaching and whether the relative weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been corrected.
- How the college has developed and shaped its provision to ensure that it meets the needs of boys.
- The effectiveness of the college's systems for quality assurance and the role played by leaders across the college in these processes.

## Information about the school

The Sholing Technology College is slightly larger than the average secondary school. It was a girls' school for over 70 years, but admitted its first cohort of boys into Year 7 three years ago following reorganisation of secondary education in the area; all year groups apart from Year 11 are now mixed. The school has been a specialist college for technology since 2002. It is heavily oversubscribed.

The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are relatively small. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

**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 popular and successful college. A key feature of this success is the excellent care, guidance and support that staff provide. This helps to create a very positive and productive ethos, where students are helped to develop positive attitudes to learning, confidence and ambition for the future. They feel very safe and happy in college and behave well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Almost everyone carries on in education when they leave.

Students achieve well. This is a very inclusive college and everyone does well; those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly rapid progress. Examination results are consistently above national averages. This is mainly because teaching is good, but also because students come to lessons with such positive attitudes to learning that they are able to benefit fully from them. However, although teaching is good overall, the way in which teachers use assessment to support students' learning is less well developed.

The college's continued success is the result of clear and focused leadership. The headteacher is providing considerable drive and ambition for the college. She has been particularly successful in creating a cohesive team of staff who share a strong, common sense of purpose. The college's work as a specialist college has played a key role in its success; it plays an important part in the college's excellent partnership work.

The college's good capacity to sustain its improvement is clearly illustrated by the way in which it has successfully moved from being a girls' school to a mixed school. This change has been managed and monitored carefully to ensure that the college is able to serve the needs of boys as well as it has served the needs of girls. Senior and middle leaders monitor the college's work well and this gives them a good understanding of its main strengths and areas for further development. This has enabled the college to maintain its effectiveness and to make some important improvements. However, monitoring has not been rigorous enough to move the overall quality of teaching to outstanding or to ensure that teachers make consistently full use of assessment in their lessons.

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

- Develop the way in which teachers use assessment to support students' learning, in particular by ensuring that:

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- all teachers make full use of information about students' targets and current achievement when they plan and teach their lessons so that everyone is challenged fully
- all teachers check students' learning carefully during the lesson, making full use of what they find to shape activities as the lesson proceeds
- teachers consistently provide regular feedback to students that gives them a clear understanding of how to improve their work and meet their targets
- the exemplary practice that exists in the college is shared among all staff
- systems for monitoring the college's work focus sharply on making sure that assessment techniques are embedded in the planning and delivery of all lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Students join the college with average levels of attainment. They make good progress and leave with above-average attainment. A large proportion of students gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including with English and mathematics; almost everyone leaves with at least five GCSE passes at grades A\* to G, including English and mathematics. Students achieve very highly in English. Their achievement in mathematics has been weaker over recent years, although it is rising: examination results improved further in 2011 and students now make good progress in many mathematics lessons. Students achieve well in the specialist subject of technology; achievement in science is rising.

This is a very inclusive college where everyone does well. More-able students who took examinations in 2010 made slightly less progress than others, but this group of students achieved more in 2011. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because the college provides them with intensive and well-targeted support.

Students are well motivated and enjoy college. Their attendance levels are above both local and national averages. Students' learning skills are well developed; for example, they work well independently and speak confidently about their work. The vast majority go on to further study when they leave; the number of leavers not in education, employment or training is very small. Students feel extremely safe in college and say that incidents of bullying are rare. They are polite and friendly and behave well in lessons and around the college. Permanent exclusions are rare; the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen and is below average.

*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:	2

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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	
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Students are supported and cared for very well. Those with particularly acute or significant needs receive excellent help; this enables them to flourish and achieve well. Robust systems are in place to ensure students' good attendance. Very effective systems are also in place to intervene at an early stage when there are disagreements between individual students; this helps to prevent bullying.

Students receive very effective support at points of transition. Well-developed arrangements ensure that students arriving from primary school settle in quickly. The Year 7 residential trip in the autumn term allows staff and students to form positive relationships from the outset. Similarly effective arrangements help to ensure that students select the correct Key Stage 4 courses and make the right choices about further study or employment at the end of Year 11.

The overall quality of teaching is good. Although no better than satisfactory in a small minority of lessons, it is good, and sometimes outstanding, in the large majority. Teachers have excellent relationships with their students and the atmosphere in classrooms is positive and very productive. Teachers teach key subject knowledge and understanding thoroughly. Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers use challenging questions, a variety of activities and a brisk pace to focus students' attention and ensure that they make rapid progress. Teachers typically share the objectives of the lesson with their classes, although students are not always helped to understand how to know when they have achieved them.

The way in which teachers use assessment in their teaching is not as consistently well developed. While some practice is excellent, in some cases:

<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

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- teachers do not do enough to check students' learning during the lesson (and they are therefore not able to modify the lesson in response)
- opportunities are missed to link the objectives and planned outcomes of the lessons with the requirements for particular GCSE grades or National Curriculum levels
- teachers do not make enough use of the very useful information about individual students' abilities and current achievement when they plan and teach their lessons to ensure that everyone is challenged fully
- oral and written feedback to students is not precise or regular enough to enable students to understand how to improve their work and meet their targets.

The curriculum has developed well over the past three years. Students have access to a good range of curriculum pathways, including a range of vocational options. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is available, although the take-up rate is rather low.

*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	3
<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?

Leaders are providing considerable drive and ambition for the college. The headteacher and her senior team are very well regarded by staff and they have successfully created a team of staff with considerable loyalty to and pride in the college. Responses to the inspection questionnaire, filled in by a large proportion of staff, were extremely positive. Governors support the college well and provide appropriate challenge to its leaders.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating the college's work are well established and involve leaders across the college. They provide leaders with an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. However, although good, systems for monitoring are currently not sharp enough to enable leaders to raise the quality of provision to outstanding. They have recognised this and plans are in place to redevelop the system this year. The way in which leaders set targets for students and track their progress is well developed and embedded in the life of the college. Information about students' progress is collected regularly and is very accurate.

The effectiveness with which the college promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination is a notable strength. As a result, no group is left behind and students with particular needs, such as those with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities, do very well. Any gaps in achievement between different groups are small, recognised by the college, and acted upon; as a result they reduce rapidly. Leaders have carefully tracked the achievement and attitudes of boys and girls since the college became mixed, making a number of changes in response to any emerging differences; as a result the gap between boys' and girls' attainment is smaller than that seen in most schools.

The college makes a significant contribution to community cohesion: much is done to forge links with the local community and, increasingly, the wider and international community. A wide range of relevant activities are in place, all based on a clear understanding of the needs of students and the community. Outstanding partnership work makes a strong contribution to the college's work. Links with local businesses, for example, resulted in a national award. Alongside close links with the university and local colleges, they help to raise students' aspirations and ambitions for the future.

The college's procedures for safeguarding meet government requirements well. Very effective partnership work with a range of agencies ensures that any concerns about individual students are followed up assiduously.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**Views of parents and carers**

An average number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Responses to most questions were similar to those typically seen. There was a mixture of positive and negative comments. There was little obvious pattern to the



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concerns raised by parents and carers, although the largest group related to concerns about misbehaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour to be good. They observed very little misbehaviour and also discussed the issue with randomly selected groups of students, all of whom felt that behaviour was good and that misbehaviour was not a significant issue for them.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Sholing 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 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1029 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	32	95	53	22	12	4	2
The school keeps my child safe	60	33	110	61	8	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	38	92	51	13	7	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	36	96	53	10	6	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	59	33	106	59	12	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	22	107	59	26	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	21	122	68	15	8	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)	58	32	104	58	9	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	29	105	58	19	11	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	23	102	57	21	12	5	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	14	110	61	25	14	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	56	31	109	61	12	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	40	87	48	16	9	4	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](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.**



7 October 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of The Sholing Technology College, Southampton, SO19 8PH**

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

We judged the college to be good; a number of things about your college are excellent. You are very well cared for and supported, and this helps you to develop well as young people. We were impressed by how polite, friendly and mature you are and by your positive attitudes to school and to learning.

The college helps you to leave with good examination results: TSTC's results are consistently better than average. This is mainly because teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. In some lessons teaching is not as good. In particular, there is scope to improve the use of assessment in lessons, for example, to check that you are learning what the teacher wants you to learn. We have asked the college to work on this area.

The headteacher and her staff are very ambitious for the college and are working hard to make it outstanding. They have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development, and know what to do next to continue the college's improvement. They are working on making further improvements to the way in which they monitor the college's work.

Yours sincerely

Chris Russell  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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