

Wrockwardine Wood Arts College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123572
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	380690
Inspection dates	29–30 May 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Davis

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	736
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Millward
Headteacher	John Jones
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
School address	New Road Wrockwardine Wood TF2 6JZ
Telephone number	01952 388300
Fax number	01952 388301
Email address	john.jones1@taw.org.uk

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Davis	Additional Inspector
Brigid Quest-Ritson	Additional Inspector
Roisin Chambers	Additional Inspector
Richard Boswell	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 36 lessons and 34 teachers, spending 19 hours in classrooms. They held meetings with groups of students, members of the governing body, and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of students' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; pupils' work; and 63 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with others from students and staff.

Information about the school

Wrockwardine Wood Arts College is below average in size for a secondary school. The great majority of students are White British. The proportions of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages. The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported by 'school action plus' is well above average. The proportion who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The school received a survey visit for religious education in 2010, when the effectiveness of this subject was judged to be inadequate.

A new headteacher took up post in September 2011. The school holds a number of awards including Artsmark Gold and the International Schools foundation award. It is a secondary 'hub school' for Arts Connect in the West Midlands.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Wrockwardine Wood Arts College is a good school. Much of its work has improved strongly since its previous inspection. It is not outstanding because teaching is not consistently strong enough to promote outstanding progress and the good curriculum is not as effective in supporting rapid progress for the youngest students, who join with limited basic skills, as those in Key Stage 4.
- Attainment is rising strongly and all groups of students make good progress from their various starting points. Leaders are rigorous in ensuring that all groups of students receive the support they need in order to achieve well. Most students enjoy their learning and are keen to do well.
- Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding. Most teachers plan well to meet students' individual needs. In a small minority of lessons, tasks are not tuned sufficiently finely to ensure that all groups of students are supported sufficiently or those of highest ability challenged appropriately. Although teachers provide verbal feedback enabling students to understand how to improve, the quality of marking of students' work is inconsistent.
- Behaviour is good. Students are respectful and value the care and support teachers provide. They say that they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe, that bullying is rare and that adults provide effective support. Attendance is above average.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders provide good support to enable teachers to improve their practice and take robust action to promote achievement and ensure students' well-being. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is personalised to meet students' needs very well and the arts college specialism supports their good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Leaders are reviewing the Key Stage 3 curriculum to nurture students and maximise their basic skills from when they first join the school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on existing outstanding practice to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that teachers plan consistently tasks that match students' individual needs, so that all groups of students receive the appropriate support and challenge
 - ensuring that the marking of students' work provides clear advice consistently on how to improve and opportunities for students to respond.

- Develop the curriculum in Key Stage 3 further, so that it meets students' individual needs better by accelerating their acquisition of literacy, numeracy and independent learning skills.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students enter the school with low levels of basic skills in reading, writing, communication, and mathematics. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly average. Levels of attainment are rising strongly by the end of Key Stage 4. In 2011, the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes was above the national average, with an average proportion gaining good passes in both English and mathematics. The school's thorough assessment and tracking of progress suggest that that will be exceeded for the current Year 11 students and this level of attainment will be sustained and improved further by those currently in Year 10. That represents good progress from students' starting points. Similar progress can be seen in reading as a result of robust systems to accelerate literacy across the school. All the current Year 11 students have reached the expected reading level for their age despite a significant proportion being two years below their expected level on entry to the school. Disabled students and those with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language make equal progress to their peers as a result of the high-quality support, care and encouragement provided.

In lessons, students are typically keen to learn and rise to the high expectations of their teachers. For example, in a Year 10 history lesson, students were engaged as they worked as members of a team to research and present information related to key figures in the history of medicine. They had then to decide who was the most influential and justify their decisions. This highly challenging task moved at a fast pace, promoted students' thinking skills and provided opportunities for independent learning and teamwork.

Although very few parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, almost all,

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rightly, expressed the view that their children enjoy their learning. They expressed positive views also about their children's progress.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching observed during the inspection was good and some outstanding practice was observed. Most parents and carers expressed positive views about the quality of teaching their children receive.

Warm relationships between students and adults are evident throughout the school, particularly in Key Stage 4. Teachers know their students well and provide effective support and encouragement for those who lack self-confidence. Students told inspectors how much they value the individual support that they receive, one saying that teachers' encouragement 'makes me feel good about my work'. Most teachers plan tasks that are fun and relevant and provide opportunities for students to work as a team and that promote independent learning skills. For example, in one English lesson observed, Year 8 students used a variety of resources to develop their descriptive vocabulary. The teacher provided them with clear guidance as to the requirement of different National Curriculum levels and so they were able to work independently to improve their own work and aim for the highest level, showing confidence in identifying the elements that produced high-quality writing.

In a minority of lessons, teachers set the same task for all groups of students, without providing sufficient support for those of lowest ability to enable them to achieve success, or appropriate challenge to stretch those of highest ability. Also, a minority of teachers do not use questioning effectively enough to recognise when students understand and are ready to move on. Students value the feedback they receive on their work and the encouragement teachers provide, one saying that teachers 'always want the best from you and want you to do well'. However, the marking of students' written work is inconsistent across subjects. Some teachers do not give students sufficient advice on how to improve their work, or provide suitable opportunities for students to respond.

The school provides well for disabled students and those with special educational needs, particularly in ensuring their acquisition of literacy skills. That has had a considerable impact on raising attainment levels across subjects by enabling the students' better understanding of examination questions. Teachers of all subjects provide frequent opportunities for students to develop their reading skills. For example, in a Spanish lesson, the teacher ensured that students were able to read short passages out loud. The school has recognised that teachers do not always provide similarly good opportunities for purposeful writing.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Leaders and pastoral staff work with younger students to establish their high expectations for behaviour in lessons and around the school and particularly to provide care and support for the significant number of students facing challenging

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circumstances or barriers to learning. Older students told inspectors that 'students and teachers have respect for each other' and that relationships are relaxed, enabling them to feel that they are partners in promoting learning. Those positive attitudes were evident during the inspection, as, despite having finished their examination courses, Year 11 students were still keen to come into school and spend time with their friends and their teachers.

Although a very few parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour, students say that behaviour in lessons is generally good and disruption is rare and, if it does occur, it is well managed. Inspectors observed a small number of instances of behaviour that was over-casual, largely in Key Stage 3, and usually as a result of less-effective teaching. However, adults use well-established procedures to support those with behavioural issues and their behaviour during the inspection was consistently good with no disruption to learning. School records show that exclusions and referrals to the internal 'focus room' are declining in response to improved behaviour management systems.

Students say that all forms of bullying are rare, incidents are 'stamped on straight away' and racism is not tolerated. Most students, therefore, say they feel safe although leaders are aware of occasions when outside events spill over into school, necessitating their support. Attendance rates have risen steadily over recent years and are now above average.

Leadership and management

The inspirational headteacher is supported by a strong team, who share his vision for the school. Together, they have established a strong ethos of teamwork amongst all staff. Leaders have successfully addressed the issues raised by the subject survey in religious education and have improved all aspects of the school's work since its previous inspection, demonstrating a good capacity to improve. Teachers are keen to improve their practice and are supported well by leaders at all levels, having the opportunity to share good practice and to undertake regular training. They are held to account for the progress of their students through regular progress meetings. Leaders are rigorous in their tracking of progress, identifying underachievement and providing support through interventions and systems of coordinated action led by the directors of student learning. The performance of different groups of students is analysed carefully and any imbalance addressed. For example, boys were identified as underperforming in English in 2011, so a variety of strategies were put into place, including 'Lads and Dads' reading sessions which have successfully promoted boys' enjoyment of reading. The school ensures in such ways that all students have equal opportunities to succeed and that there is no evidence of discrimination.

The governing body shares the vision of the headteacher, providing good support and ensuring that safeguarding meets current government requirements. It is working to develop its strategic role further in monitoring and driving school improvement.

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The curriculum is wide and varied and, in Key Stage 4, is personalised to provide three 'pathways' to meet students' needs and abilities. Special events such as enterprise days and health road shows enrich the curriculum and support students' good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, as does the wide range of outstanding performing arts and sporting activities. They include dance lessons, enjoyed by both boys and girls, promoting teamwork and boosting self-confidence. Students of all ages express pride in the exceptional choir and musicians who are undertaking a performing tour in Spain. The school is a 'hub for technology' and students are able to use a wide a variety of state-of-the-art equipment to support their learning. Year 7 students are provided with a special curriculum that supports their social and basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Good transition arrangements into the school have enabled leaders to identify that students require increasing nurture and support on entry to the school. They are working to extend the Key Stage 3 curriculum to address students' increasing social needs and low levels of basic and learning skills.

The school engages well with parents and carers. It provides information through a variety of media and seeks to involve them in their children's learning, for example, through after-school reading sessions. Parents and carers value greatly the mini-bus service provided to outlying areas that is free of charge.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



31 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Wrockwardine Wood Arts College, Wrockwardine Wood, TF2 6JZ

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do. Thank you for telling us your views, including those some of you expressed in questionnaires. We enjoyed the performance given by your exceptional choir particularly.

You go to a good school. You are making good progress and your attainment is rising strongly and is now above average by the end of Year 11. You told us that you enjoy your learning and want to do well. The school is well run and its leaders have worked hard to ensure that teaching is good and that you progress well. We have asked them to ensure that you always experience teaching of the highest quality. They can do this by making sure that teachers always plan activities that match your ability; providing support if you find lessons difficult and stretching you more if you find lessons easy. You can help by telling them when this is the case. We have also asked them to ensure that teachers give you opportunities to respond to the comments they make when they mark your work, so that you know the next steps to take in your learning. You told us how much you value the support and encouragement that teachers provide, enabling you to tackle your work confidently.

You behave well, are confident that the school will support you, and know how to keep yourselves safe. We were particularly impressed by the way in which you work together in lessons, when given the opportunity to work as a team. Your attendance is above average. You told inspectors that you enjoy the curriculum provided. We have asked them to develop this good curriculum further to support students in Key Stage 3 even more in their acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. The leaders are making sure you continue to learn well and develop well as young people, and are ensuring your safety. You can help them by continuing to work hard. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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