

# Nunnery Wood High School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	137051
<b>Local authority</b>	N/a
<b>Inspection number</b>	395317
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Mark Phillips 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>	Academy
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1340
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Annette Vaux
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alun Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Spetchley Road Worcester WR5 2LT
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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Mark Phillips	Her Majesty's Inspector
Peter Lawley	Additional Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
Dorothy Bond	Additional Inspector
Janet Catto	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent 23 hours observing 49 lessons taught by 49 different teachers. Year 11 students were on study leave during the inspection. Meetings were held with panels of students from Years 7, 9 and 10, with two members of the governing body, and with senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, together with the 482 parental and 63 staff responses that were made to the inspection questionnaires. Students' views were also considered through a written questionnaire given to a sample of students. Documentation considered included data on achievement, attendance and exclusions, together with the school's records relating to students' behaviour and incidents of bullying. The single central record of safeguarding checks was also scrutinised.

## Information about the school

Nunnery Wood High is a large comprehensive school. The great majority of students are of White British heritage. A very small minority of students speak English as an additional language or are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students who are supported at 'school action plus' or have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government for students' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Nunnery Wood High is a good school. After a dip in 2011, this year's results are on track to be much better and back to the above-average standards set in 2009 and 2010. However, the progress made by the small number of students known to be eligible for free school meals remains slower than that of students generally, teaching is not uniformly good or better, and the curriculum does not fully prepare students for life in multicultural Britain. These inconsistencies are the key reasons why the school is not outstanding, as it was at the last inspection.
- Teaching is mainly good, but not enough is of a consistently high quality to promote outstanding progress. In a minority of cases, teachers are more concerned with planning lessons that conform to set structures and teaching strategies than they are with developing students' good subject understanding.
- Many students behave superbly and show excellent attitudes to learning. Attendance is good, and students feel very safe in school. However, a few inconsistencies remain, including a small amount of untoward behaviour at break and lunchtimes, and a small amount of low-level chatter in lessons. For these reasons, behaviour and safety are good rather than outstanding.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an excellent role model, and he is supported by a strong senior team and some promising middle managers. However, the dip in examination results in 2011 – which followed a period when Nunnery Wood supported a school in challenging circumstances – caused senior management to review the school's capacity for making further improvements. This is now good. Self-evaluation, including through lesson observation, is generally accurate and staff are challenged robustly about their performance. A very strong social and moral code pervades the school, but an area of relative weakness lies in the promotion of students' cultural understanding through the curriculum.

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

- Raise the standards achieved in examinations by students in receipt of free school meals, so that they match those of other groups in the school.
- Improve the remaining satisfactory teaching by ensuring that all lessons have a predominant emphasis on promoting students' good subject-specific knowledge and understanding, rather than on conforming to generic lesson structures and teaching techniques.
- Make more use of opportunities to promote students' cultural understanding on a day-to-day basis, through work in lessons across the curriculum.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Students start Year 7 having achieved broadly average standards in their primary schools. GCSE results in 2009 and 2010 were, overall, above average; the proportions of students gaining five GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and mathematics, were significantly higher than average. However, the 2011 results saw a dramatic fall drop in results, particularly in English. Standards overall were only broadly average. The school immediately identified the causes for this, and took action to ensure that the 2012 Year 11 students were better supported in their examination preparation. There has been an intensive programme of individual and small group support; the school's tracking systems indicate that this year's results will be much improved. Inspectors' observations of current students' work, including in lessons and in their exercise books, confirmed that they are making good progress to achieve above-average standards. This supports the views of almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs also make good progress. Less secure is the progress made by students known to be eligible for free school meals. These students have made satisfactory rather than good progress, consistently over the past three years. This is despite the school's good efforts through one-to-one support and mentoring, and ensuring that the group is included equally in additional activities such as instrumental music tuition and extra-curricular sport. Achieving better examination results for this small group of students is a key area for further improvement.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching is mainly good, and this helps students to make good progress. While the majority of lessons are good with examples of outstanding teaching, there also remain a minority of sessions that are no better than satisfactory. These remaining

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inconsistencies mean that the school is not close to providing outstanding teaching, the view that was proposed through its self-evaluation.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. There is no doubt that a firm lead is provided by senior staff regarding high expectations for teachers' planning and preparation. The better lessons observed, such as a Year 10 science lesson about the advantages and disadvantages of intensive farming, were exceptionally well planned and resourced and the teaching so confident and assured that the students were totally immersed in a variety of fast-paced activities. They benefited from high-level subject content which was joined together seamlessly and without fuss by the teacher. In contrast, where teaching is weaker, teachers give too much attention to generic lesson structures and not enough emphasis to the depth of students' subject skills and knowledge.

Good teaching and support are provided for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Particularly good work is done to help those with weak literacy skills in Key Stage 3, through the use of synthetic phonics (the links between letters and their sounds) and a reading recovery scheme. The school promotes a strong moral and social code and teachers are good role models in this regard. However, they miss opportunities to develop students' cultural understanding throughout the curriculum. Inspectors saw too many examples of lessons where the promotion of cultural understanding was shallow or with too little empathy.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Students feel very safe in school, a confidence shared by their parents and carers. There are very few incidents of bullying, and these are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Students have good awareness of different types of bullying, although inspectors saw two isolated examples of homophobic and sexist graffiti which they found very surprising, given the otherwise excellent moral stance shown by students. This is also in contrast to other areas of the school, such as the toilets, which are kept by students in excellent condition. Many students behave very well indeed; the manners shown by a significant number are exemplary. Incidents of poor behaviour requiring exclusion are rarer than is typically the case in secondary schools. Considering this, inspectors were also surprised that a quarter of the parents who responded to the inspection survey expressed concerns about behaviour. The school recognises that despite the excellent behaviour of many, a minority are too boisterous at social times and, in lessons where teaching is weakest, low-level chatter sometimes occurs. Similarly, the attendance of many is excellent but there are inconsistencies, particularly for those known to be eligible for free school meals. For all these reasons, behaviour and safety are judged good rather than outstanding, as proposed by the school.

### **Leadership and management**

All appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. The headteacher is an outstanding role model who sets, by example, the excellent moral and social tone of

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the school. He and his senior team also provide clear expectations for consistency in lesson planning, although the school recognises that a minority of staff have yet to strike the right balance between planning lessons that are technically well structured and delivering lessons that provide high-quality subject knowledge and understanding. Some particularly promising middle managers have brought tangible advances over the past three years, such as in music where participation rates have soared and examination results improved considerably.

Following the last inspection, when the school was judged outstanding overall, management support was offered to a local school in challenging circumstance. The school openly admits that it was mistaken in believing that it had the capacity to support another school whilst also striving to maintain and raise standards at Nunnery Wood. School leaders are correct to identify this as a contributing factor to the dip in students' performance in 2010-2011. It is a measure of the school's now good capacity for further sustained improvement that lessons have been learnt and that the strong organisation and operation of the current senior team have restored students' good progress. At the same time, it is clear that if the school is to return to an outstanding judgement, a full focus is required on the students of Nunnery Wood rather than also supporting less highly achieving schools.

A good curriculum is provided for students of all abilities and interests. While students' moral and social development is very good, spiritual and cultural development is less strong. Good strategies are in place to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination within the school. However, given the context of the school where such a large proportion of the students come from White British backgrounds, not enough is done to promote good cultural understanding on a day-to-day basis through greater consideration of these issues in lessons.

## 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](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.

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.**



22 June 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Nunnery Wood High School, Worcester, WR5 2LT**

I am writing to inform you of the outcome from our recent inspection of your school. Thank you for sharing your views with us, particularly those students who completed questionnaires. This helped us to arrive at our judgements. Nunnery Wood High is providing you with a good standard of education.

There are three main reasons why the school was not judged outstanding, as it was when it was last inspected in 2009. First, examination results have been variable. The results in 2011 were very disappointing. It was pleasing to note that the current Year 11 are on track for much better results, and we were pleased to see you making good progress in your lessons. However, the small groups of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals have not done as well as others over the past three years. Such inconsistencies are not commensurate with an outstanding school; to be outstanding, we would expect to see everyone doing well, over a sustained period of time.

Similarly, while much of teaching is good, there are a few lessons where teachers' planning is too rigid and does not take enough account of what makes for good learning in that subject. Finally, while we were extremely impressed with the mature behaviour shown by many of you, there is still some commotion at social times around the school and, in some lessons, there is low-level chatter.

We are in no doubt that Mr Williams and his staff have great ambition for you and your school. We have given the school some clear targets to get you back to being outstanding, including taking more opportunities to promote your understanding of different cultures in lessons.

I wish you well, both over the coming years and particularly with this summer's examination results.

Yours sincerely

Mark Phillips  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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