

Ercall Wood Technology College

Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford TF1 2DT

Inspection dates

19–20 January 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The academic achievements of pupils are not consistently good enough because in some lessons teachers do not take into account or build on what pupils already know and can do.
- Although the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved, the improvement has been inconsistent and some gaps remain, especially in English and mathematics.
- Not all pupils, especially the most able, are sufficiently stretched in lessons because the work that they are doing is not demanding enough.
- Teachers do not always give enough attention to improving the literacy skills of pupils who are learning English as an additional language.
- Pupils are not always given enough time to correct their work to address any comments made by teachers when work is marked.
- In some lessons teachers provide the right level of challenge for pupils and sometimes the work is too easy.

The school has the following strengths

- Good leadership has successfully created a culture of ambition. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the college's performance because they have established effective systems to monitor teaching and progress.
- Pupils are polite, well mannered and respectful of each other and adults. The college is a calm and orderly environment.
- The number of pupils making progress and achieving good GCSE grades continues to improve.
- In the best lessons, teachers question pupils to draw out detailed responses from them that help them to improve their work.
- Leaders and teachers provide well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They provide pupils with a wide range of high quality extra-curricular experiences.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well compared with similar pupils nationally.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching makes use of accurate ongoing assessment information about pupils' progress in lessons so that the teaching offers the right level of challenge or support for pupils.
- Create more opportunities in lessons for pupils to improve their learning through:
 - consistently planning opportunities to respond to written feedback
 - increasing the number of lessons that provide appropriate levels of challenge to engage and motivate pupils to participate fully
 - encouraging all pupils to persevere with challenging tasks in lessons.
- Improve the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Make sure that the proportion of these pupils reaching or exceeding age-related levels in English and mathematics is closer to that of other pupils both in the college and nationally.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils and for the college. Leaders have very clearly communicated their vision for the college to all staff, who support the drive to improve outcomes for all pupils. Leaders have created and maintain a culture of respect and positive relationships which are shared by staff, pupils and parents.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. They use a wide range of information to draw up clear and focused plans to improve the college. Consequently, leaders and governors know the work of the college well and the inspection findings held no surprises.
- Middle leaders have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and focus on improving outcomes for pupils. They contribute to monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning within their areas and use information gathered to hold staff to account for pupils' progress. Senior and middle leaders meet regularly together to discuss their roles and the impact of their actions. Leaders have shown successfully that they are able to improve the school and can continue to make improvements.
- Professional development for teachers at all levels is well planned and linked to college improvement priorities. Leaders regularly monitor teachers' performance and can rapidly identify when staff need additional support. Support programmes are tailored to meet the specific needs of teachers and support staff, and are effective in improving their performance and the impact this is having on pupils' learning and progress.
- Performance management systems of staff are comprehensive and the targets set are linked to a range of professional expectations, including pupils' progress and achievement targets.
- Pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects that meets their needs and ambitions and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. Pupils are able to participate in a wide range of additional activities and they highly value the opportunities that are provided to broaden their experiences. Staff at the college are justifiably proud of the wide range of sporting, artistic, cultural and academic clubs that they offer. The college is clearly committed to offering equal opportunities for all pupils. Leaders monitor pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities and ensure that vulnerable pupils participate.
- Leaders have planned an assembly and tutorial programme that leads to the effective teaching of social, moral, spiritual and cultural education, and the promotion of fundamental British values. As a result, pupils have positive values and attitudes, including an understanding of, and respect for, people who are different from themselves. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education remains a strength of the college.
- Leaders use the Year 7 catch-up premium well; this is money given by the government to help pupils who enter the college behind their peers in English or mathematics. Pupils make progress especially with their reading and writing so they catch up with other pupils at the college.
- The local authority provides some advice and support as well as challenge to the college. This support is appreciated by leaders and governors and is effective.
- Leaders monitor lessons and provide helpful feedback to staff. However, there remain inconsistencies in how effectively some teachers use the college's lesson structure, which leads to uneven rates of progress for some pupils.
- Leaders spend pupil premium funding reasonably well on a range of strategies; this is additional money for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals. However, these strategies are not always as effective as they should be. Improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remain inconsistent so that gaps still exist between the achievement of this group and other pupils at the college and nationally. Consistently improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils remains a key priority for the college.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors bring a wide range of professional experience which informs and enhances the college's development. A recent audit of governors' skills has informed a series of training sessions provided by the local authority. As a result, governors are able to challenge and support leaders at all levels more effectively.
 - Governors are committed to the college's vision of 'excellence through challenge and initiative'. They question and challenge underperformance, checking that actions taken are having a positive impact.

- Governors have been appointed who bring the experience of parents from minority ethnic backgrounds and who also speak English as an additional language. As result of this, governors have played an effective part in creating new channels of communication that have resulted in increased parental engagement with the college.
- Governors are aware of how the additional funding the college receives is spent, and the overall impact it has on improving rates of progress for groups of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff and governors receive appropriate training related to safeguarding. Leaders have created a culture where all staff fully understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Staff follow the college’s safeguarding policy and procedures, and can identify pupils who may be at risk. The appropriate vetting checks are carried out on staff and visitors. Checks on the quality and safety of alternative providers are thorough and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment across the college has improved since the previous inspection but is not yet consistently good. Pupils make better progress than in previous years in both Key Stages 3 and 4 as a result of better teaching, but variations remain for some groups of pupils.
- Teachers routinely plan lessons with increasing levels of challenge. In some lessons, teachers assess progress by checking task completion rather than how well new learning has been understood. As a result, some pupils move on to more challenging work when not fully ready to do so. Equally, teachers do not always move most-able pupils on to more demanding work, and in these cases pupils do not always make the progress they could.
- Where teachers have planned lessons that include different levels of demand, not all pupils choose to move on to tougher activities when they are ready. For example, in a physical education lesson, pupils who had achieved ‘champion status’ required effective teachers’ praise and encouragement to find badminton opponents of a higher standard to play against so they could build on the progress already made.
- Teachers carry out regular and accurate formal assessments, and use the information to identify strategies and interventions to meet the learning needs of pupils. As a result, teachers know their pupils well. However, teachers do not always use this detailed information effectively to plan activities that engage or motivate all pupils to fully participate in lessons. For example, teachers have information about the reading abilities of pupils who have English as an additional language, yet some teachers still use the same text with every pupil.
- Teachers inconsistently follow the college’s marking policy. In some lessons, pupils are not regularly given the opportunity to respond to the feedback provided. As a result, pupils sometimes miss opportunities to correct or extend their work.
- Teachers in the college have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to provide interesting and engaging lessons. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because teachers are enthusiastic, approachable and supportive.
- Some teachers use excellent questioning skills that promote thinking and discussion among their pupils. Pupils enjoy thinking creatively and contributing to class discussions, and learn from the contributions of other pupils. For example, in a science lesson, pupils justified how they had classified different species of fish. Other pupils in the class identified strengths and weaknesses in the ideas presented, and pupils took action in light of the feedback they had received.
- Leaders use assessment information effectively to know when pupils are falling behind. Teachers and teaching assistants provide extra support and additional sessions to help pupils catch up and get back on track.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare **is good**

Personal development and welfare

- The college's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils and parents say they feel the college is a safe environment. They are right.
- College leaders ensure a high level of care and support for all pupils, and direct appropriate support and intervention to those who are most vulnerable. As a result, pupils state that they feel well supported in college. Pupils recognise that there are always adults in the college they can talk to if they have problems or feel at risk.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare and they are confident that adults in the college tackle it quickly and well when it does occur. The use of derogatory and offensive language by pupils is very rare and is always challenged by staff when they are aware of it.
- Pupils can describe ways to keep themselves safe from risks including those potentially involving the internet, or risks from violence and sexual exploitation. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of different situations.
- Pupils value and take full advantage of the wide range of clubs, trips and other activities that are available outside lessons. Pupils comment that participating in extra-curricular activities strengthens relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils' personal development is greatly enriched by participation in the additional activities provided.
- Pupils are increasingly well prepared for the next stages of their education. For example, pupils recently attended a careers fair held at the college that attracted over 30 contributors including apprenticeship providers, colleges and employers. Pupils' destinations at the end of Year 11 now compare favourably with national figures having improved from previous years, especially for disadvantaged pupils.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the college site during break times and moving between lessons is orderly and calm, and they respond promptly to instructions from staff. Pupils have a sense of pride in their college environment and keep it free from damage and litter. Pupils wear their college uniform with pride.
- Pupils are punctual and well prepared for their lessons.
- Inspectors noted that some pupils were not fully engaged with activities in all lessons – for example, when chatting to other pupils and not listening to instructions – but these occasions were infrequent. Pupils were usually not fully attentive because they had either completed their work and were waiting to move on or were finding tasks too challenging.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions of pupils was high at the last inspection but has since reduced. A high proportion of pupils have been placed in the college's seclusion room following incidents of poor behaviour. High usage of seclusion is a consequence of leaders' determination to maintain high expectations of conduct but retain the inclusive ethos of the college by avoiding fixed-term exclusions. Leaders' actions to maintain the good behaviour and conduct of pupils are proportionate and successful.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with other pupils nationally. Leaders are aware that disadvantaged pupils attend college less frequently than other pupils, and have introduced effective measures to tackle this. College information indicates that a recently introduced scheme to reward disadvantaged pupils whose attendance increases is proving successful in reducing levels of persistent absence.
- The small number of pupils who are educated away from the college site for a part of the week attend and behave well at these placements.

Outcomes for pupils **require improvement**

- Many pupils enter the college with levels of prior attainment significantly below the national average. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2015 show that the number of pupils achieving good GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was similar to the previous year and gaps remain between girls and boys. Boys' attainment is significantly below national levels.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics, modern foreign languages and humanities has improved significantly since the last inspection. Progress across a range of subjects is now broadly average. College leaders provided information that validates their assertion that these improvements are continuing for current pupils.

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The college's assessment information currently indicates that this year's cohort (2016) will at least maintain these improvements in progress in English and mathematics, and this remains a key improvement priority for the college.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the English Baccalaureate qualification has risen and is now close to the national average, reflecting an increase in the number of academic qualifications successfully achieved by pupils in the college.
- In 2015 disadvantaged pupils, particularly those with high starting points when joining the college, made less progress than other pupils in the college and nationally, including in English and mathematics. Gaps between the progress of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in the college have decreased. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment has improved and is now only one half of a GCSE grade lower than the attainment of other pupils in the college.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs now make progress in line with that of their peers nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieving good grades, including GCSE English and mathematics, rose in 2015 compared with the previous year.
- Pupils for whom English is an additional language make less progress than other pupils in the college. As a result, significantly fewer pupils with English as an additional language achieve good GCSE grades than other pupils at the college.
- Pupils who have low levels of skill in English and/or mathematics when they start college in Year 7 receive additional lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result of the high-quality support provided, pupils who were behind in English and/or mathematics catch up with their peers by the time they start Year 9.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision for one day per week. The pupils who are educated at locations other than the college are making the expected rate of progress.

School details

Unique reference number	123595
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number	10002472

This inspection 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	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ken Wagstaffe
Headteacher	Mr Chay Davis
Telephone number	01952 387300
Website	www.ercall-online.co.uk
Email address	admin@admin.ercall-online.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 October 2013

Information about this school

- Ercall Wood Technology College is a smaller than average-sized secondary college.
- The college has an above-average intake of pupils of minority ethnic heritage and who speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The college uses Nova Training, the Education Development Service Ltd. and the AFC Telford Study Centre as alternative provision for three pupils who attend their placements for one day per week.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 27 lessons; six of these were carried out with members of the college's senior leadership team. Lessons visited covered a wide range of subjects and all year groups across the college. Inspectors also observed registration periods and assemblies. Pupils' behaviour between lessons, at break and lunchtime was also observed by inspectors.
- Pupils' work was viewed by inspectors in lessons and separate samples were considered from some subjects.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders, teaching staff, governors and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors evaluated the 66 responses of parents to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the views of 42 members of staff through their inspection questionnaire responses.
- Pupils met formally with inspectors on two separate occasions. Inspectors also conducted many informal discussions with pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation from a variety of sources, including the college's self-evaluation and plans, college policies, college information about pupils' outcomes, teaching and behaviour, and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Rob Hackfath, lead inspector
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Her Majesty's Inspector
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