



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection Report

GLEED GIRLS' TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE

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LEA: Lincolnshire

Inspection Dates: 6 - 8 July 2004
Reporting Inspector: Linden Phillips HMI

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INTRODUCTION

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Gleed Girls' Technology College and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an independent lay inspector.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1	Very good
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Not adequate

Description of the school

Gleed Girls' Technology College is an 11-16 school in a rural location. It is smaller than the national average with 801 pupils on roll. The school a secondary modern, attainment on entry is lower than the national figure. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs are broadly in line with the national average. The school has much lower than average numbers eligible for free school meals, but this does not necessarily reflect levels of deprivation. Other reliable sources indicate that the school serves significantly disadvantaged wards. Fewer than 3% of girls are from a minority ethnic background.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Gleed Girls' Technology College is a good and improving school. The headteacher feels that Technology College status is beginning to impact significantly on standards in this third year, and inspectors agree. Staff have given much thought to developing a curriculum which better meets pupils' needs. Teaching has improved and so most girls make good progress in the majority of their subjects. Girls are well cared for. Staff and pupils in the school, with minor exceptions, treat each other with respect and courtesy. The headteacher and senior team have initiated systems of school self-review, although these would benefit from stronger co-ordination and a more explicit vision. The senior team and middle managers have a sound view of teaching quality and the inspection supported the school's evaluation that, overall, teaching is good. The school has sought the views of parents and they are positive about the education and care their daughters receive, as are the girls themselves. Finances are managed well and the school provides good value for money.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has improved in all the areas identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection report in 1999. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been significantly expanded and enhanced; it is now very good. Leadership and management have also improved as the roles of middle managers have been broadened and made more effective. Team leaders and other managers systematically monitor and improve teaching, and they have also been empowered to use national initiatives to improve practice in assessment. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs have improved. As a result, pupils make good progress and standards have improved steadily.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school has developed effective systems for development planning, although self-evaluation could be more analytical. There is a need for a sharper focus on monitoring pupils' progress and evaluating the impact of school initiatives on improving teaching and standards. The increased involvement of middle managers has enabled more staff to be directly involved in improvement, seen in a tangible willingness to engage in school-improvement dialogue. The school is responsive to new initiatives and, together with an active and involved governing body, has demonstrated that it has good capacity to improve further.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

The school should improve:

- the monitoring of its work at all levels, and set more clear cut goals for its future
- the assessment for learning so that there is consistency across all lessons in setting clear and measurable learning targets

- monitor the effectiveness of the measures it is taking to improve attendance, particularly in Y11.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The achievement of pupils is good. Taking into account that 25% of higher ability pupils are admitted to local selective schools, standards are well above those that might have been expected given pupils' prior attainment. Results in public examinations are in line with national averages and have risen in line with national trends at Key Stage 3 and, for those gaining five A* - G grades, above national trends at Key Stage 4. In addition, pupils have achieved well in a wide range of vocational courses, which is not fully recognised in the data used to compare the performance of schools. However, there is considerable variation between subjects. In particular, the school's specialist technology status has not been used sufficiently to secure good rates of progress in mathematics for higher ability pupils in Key Stage 4. It was not possible to confirm by direct observation the progress of pupils at Key Stage 4, but the school's evaluation recognises that their progress does not build sufficiently on standards achieved in Key Stage 3. Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that, overall, girls make good progress.

Grade: 2

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Inspectors agree with the school's view that pupils' personal development is good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school was good and the atmosphere at lunch times, for example in the library and dining room, was calm and relaxed. The pupils were polite, helpful and smiling. Even those who were temporarily unable to cope with the high expectations held by teachers in mainstream classes, spoke in a reasoned manner about their transgressions. The school reports that a small minority of the pupils have negative attitudes which surface in some lessons and in occasional unharmonious relationships with other pupils. There has been a number of fixed-term and permanent exclusions which the school aims to reduce with a behaviour code of graded responses. Generally, pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and are keen to do well, reflecting the school's effective promotion of positive values and aspiration. Attendance is broadly in line with national figures but tails off in Year 11, where it is around 88 per cent. The school is rightly concerned about this and has put appropriate measures in place whose effectiveness in improving both attendance and attainment it now needs to monitor.

Pupils respond positively to opportunities provided for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development. Many spoke of their pride in the school's sporting successes and their appreciation of the varied cultural visits and activities run by most departments. They participate enthusiastically in social and charitable events, such as organising Christmas parties for older people. Year group and class assemblies offer opportunities to develop spiritual and moral qualities and these are received with interest and understanding. A poem about family relationships and the fleeting passage of time read by a teacher in a class assembly met with nods of recognition and a genuine moment of reflection. Pupils take part in a daily act of worship.

Pupils contribute effectively to school life, for instance through the school council, which acts energetically to enhance the pupils' life at school, for instance by organising a sponsored walk to raise money for new picnic benches. The council has also contributed to the school's bid to become a 'Healthy School' by suggesting healthier food options which the school has made available.

Grade: 2

QUALITY OF PROVISION

The school judges that most of its teaching is good and observations support that. Most teaching is good, some very good and there is very little that is not adequate. Most lessons demonstrate a good ethos for learning.

The best lessons are well planned, have high expectations and move learning on briskly. Many teachers explain ideas clearly and challenge pupils to extend themselves, and the pupils respond well. Behaviour is generally managed effectively, and relations in classrooms are good. Teachers often employ humour and praise which encourage pupils to give of their best. Weaker aspects in teaching include a lack of clarity in communicating learning objectives and inadequate checking of pupils' understanding.

Assessment for learning is not yet embedded in most teachers' planning. This means that girls and teachers do not always have a shared understanding of what has been achieved and pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve. The introduction and adaptation of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is having a good effect upon teachers' lesson planning and teaching styles, and is raising expectations.

The school's curriculum is very good and meets all statutory requirements. The Key Stage 3 Strategy has had a positive impact in pulling the staff together to share ideas, challenge perceptions and re-invigorate teaching styles. The Key Stage 4 curriculum has developed considerably since the last inspection and now includes a wide range of courses for all abilities including GCSEs, NVQs and applied GCSEs. Academic and vocational courses offer an appropriate and flexible mix of options taught within the school and local further education colleges. The girls' progress to further and higher education and employment is supported well. The curriculum promotes the inclusion of all learners. For example wheelchair users are encouraged to take a full part in sport. Girls who have learning needs, who are on the gifted and talented register and who are average achievers, all have appropriately focused support.

There is a good range of cross-curricular activities that run largely at lunch times and many opportunities for curriculum enrichment outside the locality, such as science trips to the Natural History and Science Museums, and exchanges with pupils in Germany. Cultural trips to the theatre and opera support other areas of the curriculum.

Parents are informed when their children are placed on the SEN register and when referred to a learning mentor. Thirty-five per cent of parents responded to a recent questionnaire on school provision and the response was positive. Whilst there has been progress with parental contact, the school realises there is more to do, for example in sharing the school's aim to improve attendance.

Arrangements to help pupils move from the large number of primary schools are good and include an informative and user-friendly "survival guide" called *Learn and Enjoy*. There is a strong awareness of child protection matters and issues surrounding looked-after pupils. Two enthusiastic learning mentors provide good support for the academic progress of

vulnerable pupils, for example, by devising revision plans for pupils in Year 11 and liaising with parents and class teachers. They have also worked effectively with pupils on the gifted and talented register, within a well-organised approach. The inspection team's discussions with pupils confirmed that some felt they were picked on or intimidated by older girls. The school recognises this problem and is developing effective ways of preventing and stopping it. The school has begun to draw together more closely the pastoral and academic support for all pupils, for instance by developing a mentoring system for those who are making average progress. The collaboration of form teachers and heads of year on academic improvement is inconsistent and not fully developed. Careers provision is good and there are helpful links with colleges of further education and universities within the region. Other community links, for instance with local businesses, are extensive and benefit pupils of all ages. Support from a local sponsor for the gymnastic team, for example, has been extremely helpful.

Grade: 2

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school management has provided opportunities to allow leaders and managers at all levels to develop appropriate strategies to improve teaching and raise attainment. Senior managers have a sound knowledge of their school and provide good leadership. Middle managers are highly effective in developing new strategies and are beginning to encourage other staff to use them.

The school has monitored and reviewed its progress in a variety of ways. However, the information is not brought together in a form which supports the sharp setting of priorities or the articulation of a clear vision. The school has improved its monitoring of girls' progress, although the use of data is underdeveloped. Despite some inconsistency, departments are active, and supported, in improving teaching.

The school takes very good care to ensure that all its girls are able to access the curriculum. The views of girls and their parents are sought and acted upon.

Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified, and the school provides in-service training for all staff to prepare them for the implementation of its initiatives. The school has encountered difficulties arising from staffing absence and has made efforts to alleviate the effect on class teaching. The school supports teachers on a number of training schemes. Although some of the school's accommodation is ready for improvement, the school has deployed its budget well to provide new, bright buildings and improve the décor of many classrooms. There are sufficient resources to support teaching and learning. The provision of information and communication technology is particularly good and allows considerable, informed, cross-curricular use.

The school's many good links with other providers of education support girls' learning, giving them a breadth of view which assists their movement onto post-16 courses. The school is in the process of reviewing externally provided courses so that it can make long-term provision for those which are of clear benefit for specific groups of girls.

The governing body and the management team ensure that the school complies very well with all statutory requirements.

Grade: 2

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