



Wembley High Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101550
LEA Brent LEA
Inspection number 276535
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Paul Dowgill HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	East Lane
School category	Community		Wembley
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Middlesex HA0 3NT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02083854800
Number on roll	1014	Fax number	02083854899
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2002	Headteacher	Ms Gill Bal

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Wembley High Technology College is a mixed, 11-18 comprehensive with just over 1100 students on roll, of whom about 160 are in the sixth form. The school serves an area with high levels of both social and economic deprivation. The number of students entitled to free school meals is very high. The school has a diverse student population with many ethnic groups represented. No single group makes up the majority of students. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is high. There are slightly more boys than girls. The number of students with identified learning difficulties is slightly above average. About one quarter of the students are refugees or asylum seekers and the school accepts around forty students each year from war torn countries. Students start school at the age of eleven with knowledge and understanding that are below and sometimes well below the levels expected nationally for this group. The school gained Technology College specialist status in September 2002.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Wembley High Technology College is an effective and improving school with many strengths. It is well led and managed. The standards achieved by students and the progress they make are improving. In 2005 the GCSE results were around the national average. At the end of Year 9, standards need to be better. The school has clear plans to bring about this improvement. There is a balance of good and satisfactory teaching in the school. To improve the quality of teaching, teachers are working together and sharing their ideas about what works best. The curriculum is well matched to students' needs and there is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. The school needs to improve the standards and quality of education in the sixth form. The school provides outstanding support for students and they are very well cared for. A strength of the school is the good relationships between the staff and students, and how well students get on with each other. Students enjoy being at school and contribute well to all aspects of school life. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. There are very few incidents of bullying or racism. Students feel safe. Attendance is good, although the punctuality of some students could be improved. The school has made many improvements since the last inspection and is rigorous when looking at its own performance. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements the school made about itself. Specialist school status has helped the school to make improvements in the quality of education it provides and in its links with the local community. The school is in a very strong position to move forward and its capacity to improve is very good. The headteacher knows her school's strengths and weaknesses very well, and she is passionate in her drive to raise standards. She is supported effectively in this by a strong leadership team and committed staff.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is small but has grown in popularity over the past few years. Inspectors agree with the school's own view that the sixth form is satisfactory. Students make satisfactory progress relative to their GCSE results. Results have been strongest in business studies vocational courses, but overall standards are low. Girls do not achieve as well as boys, particularly at A level. The school knows that some aspects of the sixth form need improving and has started to take action, such as checking and recording students' progress more regularly.

What the school should do to improve further

* Continue to raise standards at GCSE and in Years 7 - 9. * Ensure all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of students and provide them with challenging work. * Strengthen the quality of teaching and learning by ironing out the inconsistencies within departments and across subjects. * Take action to improve the quality of education and standards in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' achievements and standards overall are satisfactory and are improving. Many students start year 7 with standards that are below or well below average. Between starting school and Year 11, the rate at which students are making progress has improved in the past few years. This is due to the school putting much more emphasis on monitoring how well students are achieving and matching the work more to their needs. There is no major difference in the progress made by students from different ethnic groups but boys do slightly better than girls. The progress students make is better in Years 10 and 11 than it is in Years 7 to 9. The standards at GCSE are improving. In 2004, the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five or more higher GCSE grades was below average, but a high percentage gained five or more passes. In 2005, there was a considerable increase in the number of students achieving five or more higher GCSE grades. These results are in line with the national average. The monitoring of students' performance, setting of challenging targets and the extra support provided by the school, such as Saturday classes, helped them achieve good results. The school knows which subjects have to improve and is putting in place strategies to help them achieve this. At the end of Year 9, the standards in English, mathematics and science are well below average when compared to other schools nationally. The number of students achieving standards that are average or better is increasing in mathematics and English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The ethos created by the school's leadership team and staff supports and encourages a high level of personal development and well-being amongst the students. The moral, social and cultural development of students is good and helps raise their self-esteem. There is mutual trust and respect between the staff and students, which results in good relationships. The school has recently focused successfully on raising expectations of improved behaviour. Students have responded well to this. Their behaviour around the school is good and bullying is rare. Exclusion rates were high for a while but are now steadily decreasing. Incidents of racism in the school are rare and there are no tensions between different groups of students. Students feel safe within the school. Students enjoy being at school and this is demonstrated by their good attendance. They have a positive attitude to learning but some do not always show this by arriving punctually to school or lessons. Older students are very keen to be involved in supporting school initiatives such as mentoring younger students and being sports leaders. The excellent range of extra curricular activities contributes well to students adopting healthy lifestyles. They are given good advice on health issues. The school has worked well with external agencies to prepare students for further education and careers. Through specific courses and work experience, the school ensures students are developing the skills needed for their future economic well-being. The school is succeeding in raising students' expectations. Students' views are obtained through

surveys but the school and the health councils do not meet regularly enough. The school acts on students' suggestions, for example, in developing the rewards system.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding class teaching. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations of the students and present them with challenging and interesting work. Lessons are lively and purposeful and students are fully involved in their learning. This is due to teachers' planning thoroughly, their good organisation and creative use of resources, and having a good understanding of student needs. Where lessons are less effective, teachers talk for too long and do not make sufficient demands of the students. In these lessons, students are all too willing to let teachers do much of the work for them. Relationships are good and in most lessons students are managed well. Good teaching of students with specific needs, such as those with English as an additional language, means they make rapid progress in their learning. In Years 10 and 11, teachers use a range of teaching methods that meet the needs of individual students well. The quality of teaching and learning in most subject areas is good. In Years 7 to 9, the quality of teaching and learning is much too variable across subjects. Senior managers regularly observe teaching and have a clear understanding of where the strengths and weaknesses lie. The new initiative to further improve the quality of teaching is at an early stage of development. Teachers are beginning to use the results from assessments to help individual students improve. Some are doing this very well but this is not yet consistently applied across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school has thoroughly reviewed and developed its curriculum since the last inspection. It now provides a good and varied curriculum that meets the needs of individual students well. In Years 7 to 9 extra lessons are provided to support students with specific needs. In Years 10 and 11, the school offers a range of vocational courses both in school and at a local college. These relevant courses, together with clear guidance for students when choosing subjects to study for external examinations, are a strength of the provision. They are contributing significantly to the improvement in standards. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular and subject enhancement activities available for students. The impact of these can be seen in improved attendance, behaviour and student motivation. They have been particularly successful in developing students' skills in sport, music, drama, mathematics and literacy. The provision for gifted and talented students is at an early stage of development, although

additional activities already in place provide good challenge and support for these students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of the care, guidance and support the school provides for its students is outstanding. The staff are very committed to ensuring students have every opportunity to reach their potential. The needs of all students are effectively identified when they arrive at school and appropriate and sensitive support is provided. Support for students who have little knowledge of English is excellent. Students with learning difficulties benefit from partnerships with external groups to help motivate them to learn. Students themselves speak highly about the level of support provided by the staff and the interest they take in them. Health and safety and Child Protection requirements are fully met. Any bullying is quickly identified and effectively dealt with. As a result of this students feel safe. Staff provide very good academic guidance for students. Students and parents have every opportunity to be involved in reviewing students' performance and the setting of targets. Students frequently discuss aspects of their work with teachers. For older students there is good career guidance. Work experience is provided for all students to help inform their future decisions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The headteacher has successfully led the school through a period of considerable change. Since her appointment three years ago, she has focused on changing the culture of the school in order to drive up standards and tackle underachievement. Although not an easy process, she has been tireless in pursuit of improvement and ensuring that the students are at the centre of all the school does. She is understandably proud of the school's achievements to date, as reflected in higher GCSE results, better pupil behaviour and improving the popularity of the school. The headteacher is well supported in her aim to make this an outstanding school by an enthusiastic leadership group of senior staff. A recent re-organisation has made subject leaders more accountable for students' success and this is beginning to work well. The headteacher is careful to recruit staff of good quality. There is a commitment to training for all staff to support the plans to improve the school further. There is strong support from governors for the work of the headteacher. The Governing body struggles to recruit parent governors. The school has good links with other organisations and parents and continues to develop these so as to strengthen its support for individual students. Even though the school is steadily reducing a deficit budget, resources have improved and they are managed effectively. Members of the leadership group know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. Their self-evaluation, which draws on the views of students, teachers, parents and governors, is detailed

and analytical. Actions are planned to address weaknesses in some subject areas and also in the sixth form, although it is too early to judge their impact. With a strong and effective senior management team now in place, the school's capacity to improve is very good.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for all the help you gave to the inspectors when we came to your school. We enjoyed being in the school and talking to the groups of students we met. We know that you will be interested in what we thought about your school.

* Wembley High is a good and improving school that is well led and managed by the headteacher and senior staff. The part you play in helping the school improve even more is important. * The results you are getting, especially at GCSE, are improving. * You are supported well by the staff who are committed to making sure you achieve the best you can. * Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Your school is a safe place because there are few incidents of bullying or racism. Students generally get on well with each other. * There is a wide range of activities provided for you outside of lessons and many of you make good use of these opportunities. * Most of you enjoy school and your attendance is good. The punctuality of some of you though could be better.

We have asked your school to * Continue to improve the results in Year 9, at GCSE and in the sixth form, which you can help in by continuing to work hard and meet your targets. * Ensure that you are given challenging work that tests your abilities. * Improve the teaching and your learning in some subjects.