



Selly Park Technology College for Girls

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103498
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276938
Inspection dates 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006
Reporting inspector Davinder Dosanjh HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	5 Selly Park Road
School category	Community		Selly Park
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Birmingham B29 7PH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4721238
Number on roll	750	Fax number	0121 4152799
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Anne Rae
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Miss Michelle Magrs

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	Inspection number 276938
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Selly Park Technology College for Girls is a popular, smaller than average, comprehensive school on the south side of Birmingham. The school gained specialist schools status for technology in 1996. Most students enter the school having achieved below average results in their primary schools. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is approximately 90%. Over half have a Pakistani heritage and there are significant minorities of White, Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi students. The proportion of students whose first language is not English is very high at 71.7%. Eligibility for free school meals is well above the average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained a number of national awards for its improved academic achievement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many outstanding features. Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Teachers know the students very well and give them good care, guidance and support. Students feel safe and the school is a very caring community. There is a strong learning ethos and students are rightly proud of their school. Attendance is good; students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Parents are largely supportive of the school. The curriculum is broad and complemented by extremely successful 'super learning' days and Saturday morning revision clubs which have led to outstanding achievements at Key Stage 4. The excellent GCSE results in 2005 were the best in the school's history. The progress the students make from Years 7 to 11 puts the school in the top 1% in the country. The school has continued to gain a number of national awards for its improved academic achievement. Students' progress is tracked well at Key Stage 4 but the school has yet to develop an effective school-wide system to improve achievement at Key Stage 3. The results in mathematics and science are lower than expected. Teaching is good overall but students need to be given more opportunities to develop skills of working independently. The school's specialist technology status is producing many benefits in the curriculum and improved links with the wider community. The headteacher provides very good leadership. The school's self-evaluation identifies what it needs to do to improve. Improvements made since the last inspection have been good and most areas for improvement have been addressed. The school now has a brand new sports hall which is being well used by the students and the local community. The school has a good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science and mathematics throughout the school
- Improve the progress of students in Years 7 to 9
- Further develop the tracking and monitoring systems in Years 7 to 9.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The achievement of the students is outstanding. Students enter the school with attainment which is below the national average, and they make outstanding progress by the end of Year 11. Standards reached by the time the girls leave the school are very high. The number achieving five or more A*–C grades is well above the national average, with the proportion of students who arrive with low attainment in Year 7 gaining higher grades being particularly high.

By the end of Key Stage 3, students' attainment in national tests in 2005 is below average compared with the standards they reached in their primary schools. The results in mathematics and science in particular are lower than expected. Students are currently making good progress in lessons and the school has put in place a number of strategies to improve achievement and standards at Key Stage 3. By contrast, standards at the

end of Key Stage 4 are very high, with 84% of students gaining five or more higher level GCSE passes in 2005. Results were high in design and technology, benefitting from the school's specialist status, and also in art and design, and religious education. Students achieve very well in vocational subjects, but again standards in mathematics and science are not as high. Students from different backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities all make extremely good progress, and no girls failed to take examinations.

The progress the students make through their time in school puts it in the top 1% in the country. The teachers go out of their way to encourage, support and assist the students to improve their examination results in Years 10 and 11, and students respond to this very well. There is now a stronger emphasis on making use of assessment to focus teaching and learning, and this has helped the students to know what they need to do to improve further. The school sets itself challenging targets and exceeded them in 2005.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They enjoy coming to school, work hard when they are there and have very positive attitudes to learning. A large proportion of students attend extra classes and support groups, which have a positive effect on their examination results. Attendance is good, but is affected by some long term, unauthorised absences, particularly by younger students. Students behave very well both in class and around the school. The students feel safe and the school has a very good climate for learning. Excellent displays celebrate students' work and give information about good practice and standards. Incidents of bullying are dealt with very well, including use of older students as mentors.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is developed extremely well across the curriculum. There are high expectations of behaviour and a positive ethos of respect. Students are confident, cooperate well, and know how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. They are well aware of issues about alcohol, drugs and sex education. Students increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles. They have been proactive in changing the school meals menu to include healthier options. The students' contribution to the school and wider community is good. Students' views are aired and considered at the school council. Students are extremely well prepared for leaving school and continuing in further education, and have a very positive attitude to vocational alternatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence confirms the school's own assessment that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Relationships between teachers and students are very good and

this contributes to students' motivation and progress. The subject knowledge of teachers is often very good. In the most successful lessons there is detailed planning by the teacher, with a range of stimulating activities holding students' interest. The 'word wall' was used highly effectively in a religious education lesson to support students' literacy skills. In a number of subjects good use is made of paired work and group work to solve problems, prepare short tasks and presentations. However, some lessons are too directed by the teacher and planning is not matched to the full range of students' needs. There is insufficient challenge for the most able students and opportunities to develop independent learning skills are limited. Questioning techniques are restrictive and do not probe students' learning sufficiently.

The focus on 'assessment for learning' is developing with some examples of good practice. Where assessment information is shared with students so that they know exactly what is expected of them in their work in order to achieve a particular level or grade, they are able to make good progress as a result. In other lessons, this information is not shared with students and they do not know how to make progress. Homework is not set consistently to support learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding, broad curriculum that meets the needs of all students. A wide range of courses is offered, including a good choice of vocational subjects. Able students are stretched by being entered for some examinations early and those struggling with language are provided with literacy support by studying media studies at Key Stage 3. There is a well organised programme of careers education and work experience which prepares students well for their future economic well-being.

The curriculum is complemented by an extensive range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. Students take advantage of the opportunities for sports, visits, international links and additional support for learning. Super learning days and the Saturday morning revision club have been extremely successful in enabling students to learn in a focused environment. The school's specialist technology status is producing many benefits. It has led to a wider choice in the curriculum, increased facilities for technology and improved links with primary schools, industry and the development of international links. All of these have enhanced students' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support offered to students, including those who have additional learning needs, are good. A wide range of very effective guidance and support strategies are provided by staff who are trained appropriately. A feature of the school is that the teachers know the students very well; they monitor their progress informally in great detail and give up their own time for weekend and after-school classes. Students' progress is tracked well in Years 10 and 11, but the school is yet to develop an effective school-wide system to identify and remedy underachievement in Years 7, 8 and 9. Students feel safe and secure and are appreciative of the access

they have to staff if they have academic or pastoral problems, including the highly effective and well regarded learning mentors. Risk assessments are thorough and comprehensive and staff are appropriately trained in child protection procedures. A range of impressive initiatives has created an ethos of healthy lifestyles. The school has focused on encouraging the take-up of extra-curricular sports clubs and teams, made possible by the extended use of the new sports hall. Careers guidance is thorough, and is evident throughout the curriculum, resulting in a range of relevant activities including mock interviews, work experience and individual guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges leadership and management as good. The school's self-evaluation rightly identifies what the school needs to do to improve. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Since her appointment, she has effectively promoted the personal development and well-being of students, addressed a deficit budget and ensured students continue to make outstanding academic progress by the time they leave the school at age 16. The school improvement plan reflects a focus on achievement and standards. However, there are limited explicit links made with improving the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise achievement and standards. Senior leaders are keen to ensure that the very good systems for monitoring and tracking progress at Key Stage 4 are replicated in Key Stage 3. There is not yet a coherent link between whole-school target setting, and subject and students' targets at Key Stage 3. The role of the subject leader in monitoring the quality of teaching and securing good progress at all key stages is underdeveloped.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. It has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and holds the school effectively to account. It is highly supportive of the senior leadership team and the headteacher. Parents endorse students' statements that they enjoy coming to school. They are largely supportive of the school and headteacher. Specialist technology status has contributed to significant improvements in the curriculum, engagement with the wider community and students' learning. The school provides good value for money.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

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

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

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

Dear Students

A team of Ofsted inspectors recently visited your school. We would like to thank you for being so helpful and courteous. We enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You are right to be proud of your school.

Selly Park Technology College for Girls is a good school with many outstanding features. You achieve very good results at the end of Year 11 and make excellent progress during your time in the school. This is because the school supports you very well and gives you lots of opportunities for further study, especially those of you in Years 10 and 11. Your progress up to Year 9 is not as good as it should be, and mathematics and science results are too low. Most lessons are well planned by your teachers and, in the best lessons, they use a good variety of approaches to keep you interested and give you clear directions about how to improve your work.

The staff provide good care, guidance and support for you all. We were very impressed by how much most of you enjoy the school, and feel that your positive attitude to learning is helping you to succeed. The school is led well and the staff work very hard to help you.

We have asked your school to:

raise standards in science and mathematics throughout the school

improve the progress of students in Years 7 to 9

further develop the tracking and monitoring systems in Years 7 to 9.

The managers, teachers, governors and staff are highly committed to their work and know that your school has the potential to do even better. Thank you for the way in which you represented your school and yourselves during our time with you. We wish you well.

Yours faithfully

Davinder Dosanjh Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools