



John Willmott School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103522
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276942
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 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	Reddicap Heath Road
School category	Community		Sutton Coldfield
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Midlands B75 7DY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 3781946
Number on roll	1134	Fax number	0121 3111437
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Robert Evans
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mr Ken Niimmo

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

John Willmott is a very popular mixed ability school and has been a specialist technology college since September 2001. There are 1,166 students on roll, of whom 200 are in the sixth form. Students from a White British background represent 82% of the school population. The proportion of students receiving free school meals and students who have special educational needs are above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory education overall and some aspects of its work are good. This is line with the school's view of itself. Parents are very positive about the school, the headteacher and the support, commitment and enthusiasm of the staff. Standards are improving but the progress made by some students could be better. The school achieved its best GCSE results in 2005 but is not complacent about raising achievement and is striving to do better. Students enjoy school, feel trusted and appreciate the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Students are well behaved and polite. Teaching is satisfactory and the staff training on teaching and learning is starting to show some impact in the classroom. However, there is a lack of challenge in some lessons for the high attaining students and insufficient promotion of independent learning. Tracking and monitoring of student progress is inconsistent. There are good plans in place to develop the school curriculum. The school has been successful in being redesignated as a specialist technology college and was recently awarded the accolade of being part of the 'most improved schools club'. The headteacher is very committed and determined to bring about change and improvement. He sets a clear direction for his managers and staff. There has been improvement in the main issues identified in the last inspection. The school has a good capacity to improve as indicated by the strong leadership team now in place and the clear priorities for development. The school provides satisfactory value for money

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and the efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Improvements have been made since the last inspection with a more effective guidance programme and the use of target setting to monitor progress. The standards reached by students are satisfactory. The collaborative arrangements with the local school and consortium are good and broaden the choice of subjects on offer. Sixth form students are actively involved in a range of activities including, peer mentoring and producing the school newsletter. Students value the support and responsibility they are provided with. Assessment practice is inconsistent; marked work does not always identify areas for improvement and make clear how marks are awarded. The work of the sixth form is not rigorously monitored and evaluated.

What the school should do to improve further

- In order to raise standards and achievement the school needs to improve the quality of teaching and learning by closely matching activities to individual needs.
- Ensure there is more rigorous tracking and monitoring of students' progress to inform planning and convert student 'potential into reality'.
- Encourage student independence within lessons and the school community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The attainment of students joining the school in Year 7 is average. Standards across the school as a whole are broadly average and improving across Key Stages 3 to 4. By the end of Year 9, students make good progress in English and satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. There, the rate of improvement since 2003 has been impressive. By the end of Year 11, student progress is satisfactory. The proportion of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has risen significantly to 58% in 2005. The proportion of students achieving A* to A grades at GCSE is very low. Higher attaining students do not progress as well as they could. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress. In the sixth form, standards have improved since the last inspection but also show an overall decline has been declining since 2003. The school's post 16 results represent satisfactory progress for many students. There is further room for improvement in the standards reached for AS subjects. The school now sets appropriate and challenging targets and has exceeded its targets for Year 9 and Year 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall personal development and well being of students is good. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school has successfully developed a strong code of conduct. Consequently students behave well and the rate of fixed term exclusions is declining significantly. Relationships are a strength of the school and staff deal firmly with reported incidents of anti-social behaviour. This enables students to feel safe and secure. Students are adequately prepared for adult life. They are keen to make positive contributions both in school and the community, however there are not enough opportunities for students to be responsible for their own learning and to find things out for themselves. The wide range of sporting activities encourages students to adopt healthy lifestyles and students are involved in discussions to provide healthier school meals. Most students like school and they say that teachers often make learning fun. Attendance rates are satisfactory. Students show enthusiasm in lessons and enjoy the good range of clubs and trips. There is a strong feeling of community within the school and students learn to respect others. However there are few planned opportunities for students to reflect on their lives or to experience the rich diversity of a multicultural society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There are good relationships between students and staff. Students feel valued and trusted and respond by sharing good humour while working. The training that the school has put in to promote briefer,

more stimulating starts and ends to lessons, has made lessons crisper. Students have noticed a change in styles of teaching, and say they get more fun out of lessons, since teachers interact more with them. Teachers use resources well. The use of computers and interactive whiteboards adds interest and clarity to teachers' explanations, with a consequent boost to progress. The school's new common planning format is used effectively. It guides teachers to clearer learning objectives and the need for learning outcomes to match different attainment levels. In the stronger lessons these outcomes are really sharp and set challenging tasks for students. This is not consistent across the school, and some targets for higher attaining students are not challenging enough. This is because assessment information is not guiding the planning rigorously enough in some lessons. There is a tendency to direct students too closely, inhibiting their creativity and capacity to explore different solutions to problems. Some detailed marking helps students to know how to improve, but this is not a consistent practice.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides a range of interesting work but the opportunities for students to follow vocational and work-related courses are limited. The school is keenly aware of this, and planning to improve the match of subjects and courses to students' interests and needs is well advanced. From September 2006, new courses will focus strongly on enabling all students to achieve well through ensuring that all are well served and motivated by the learning experiences available. The school's specialist technology college status enriches the curriculum through forging links across subjects and with the community. These enable the school to be responsive to local needs, and for students to have many opportunities to take on community responsibilities. There are a wide range of clubs and enrichment activities and cheerleading and netball clubs were extremely well led by older students. Provision for students with learning difficulties takes adequate account of individual needs. The sixth form curriculum is good. The joint collaboration arrangements work well to provide students with a choice of courses. This includes AS and A-level subjects and vocational options and, a new critical thinking course has recently been introduced for gifted and talented students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, support and guidance provided by the school is satisfactory. The school is rightly proud of its caring ethos and provides good support to those students with particular problems such as disaffection, preparing for examinations and emotional difficulties. Appropriate arrangements for child protection are in place and the key staff are vigilant of the needs of vulnerable students. The school has forged good links with external agencies to support its work. Teachers pay due attention to health and safety but the monitoring of these procedures is not yet fully in place. Students with learning difficulties make the most progress when they receive carefully targeted

support, for example, through one-to-one and small group work. Systems to measure the effectiveness of support, such as the use of learning mentors, are developing. Good careers advice and strong links with industry prepare students well for life beyond school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school correctly judges leadership and management as satisfactory. The school's self-evaluation, supplemented by departmental review and evaluation, rightly identifies what the school needs to do to improve. With the appointment of a new leadership team, the school is in a period of transition and well placed to build on the improvements achieved since the last inspection. There is widespread acknowledgement of the need for students to make better progress. The school improvement plan focuses on improving the quality of teaching and learning. However there are limited explicit links made between improving teaching in order to raise achievement and standards. Senior leaders are keen to secure improved systems for monitoring and tracking progress. Some subject areas have highly effective systems for ongoing and regular monitoring of progress of students. This is not yet consistent across all subject areas and there is not a coherent link between whole school target setting, subject and student targets. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. It holds the school to account and over recent years has effectively addressed some difficulties, which has led to significant improvement. It is highly supportive of the senior leadership team. Parents endorse students' statements that they enjoy coming to school. They are highly supportive of the school and new headteacher. In 2005, the school was successful in securing redesignation as a specialist technology college as a result of its contribution to improvements in the curriculum, the wider community and students' learning.

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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?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
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	3	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
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	3	
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?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
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	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
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	No
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

John Willmott School Reddicap Heath Road Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B75 7DY

2 March 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you and watching you in lessons and taking part in other activities. You gave us a clear and enthusiastic account of school life.

The inspection found a good deal that the school can be pleased about. We found that you get on well together and enjoy school. We were all impressed with the friendly atmosphere in your school and the way in which you behaved in lessons showing a readiness to learn. We enjoyed the exciting cheer leading practice in the gym and sixth form students having fun in their Ready Steady Cook session. You value the support teachers give you in and out of lessons. Your parents are also very positive about the school. Occasionally, some of you lack concentration and disturb others' learning.

We agree with your headteacher's view that you have the potential to do better. We have asked your headteacher, his senior team and the teachers to do the following things:

- Plan the work in lessons more carefully to match your individual needs, especially if you are finding it too difficult or easy.
- To ensure there is more rigorous tracking and monitoring of your progress
- To provide more opportunities for you to take part in activities which help you to work on your own.

We think this is an exciting time in the life of your school. The headteacher, managers, teachers, governors and staff are very committed and know your school has the potential to do even better. The new Year 10 options to be introduced in 2006 will more closely meet the needs of all students.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Davinder Dosanjh Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools