



Pool Hayes Community School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104251
LEA Walsall
Inspection number 277116
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Philippa Francis HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Castle Drive
School category	Community		Willenhall
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Midlands WV12 4QZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 368147
Number on roll	1150	Fax number	01902 609501
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Lyn Staffiere
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr James Clarke

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 277116
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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

Pool Hayes is a large community school. It has 1,093 pupils including 87 in the sixth form. Many pupils come from areas of high social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is high. Attainment on entry is low and a higher than average number of pupils has learning difficulties and disabilities. A long-standing sixth form partnership with a neighbouring school is in place.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and improving. This judgement matches the school's own assessment of its work. The school is building an increasingly good reputation and is oversubscribed. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have succeeded in improving pupils' performance in the last year. Achievement is satisfactory but targets set in individual subjects are often insufficiently challenging. Pupils enjoy school. A high standard of care is an important part of the school's ethos.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are considerable strengths in provision for arts and physical education. However, mathematics teaching is much less effective. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils of different ability are fully challenged or use assessment in lessons effectively. The school manages its finances with a very tight budget and spends carefully. In the light of improved performance it provides satisfactory value for money.

Since the last inspection behaviour and attendance have improved. The senior management team has been reorganised and has undergone a considerable change in focus and is now effectively making improvements. Recent actions have had a positive impact on pupils' performance. Early signs of further progress are clearly evident in teaching and learning and the school has the capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is satisfactory, in contrast to the school's view that it is good. It provides a broad and relevant curriculum delivered jointly through an effective partnership with Sneyd School, a neighbouring school. Test results are lower than average but pupils make good progress because they are well supported. Teaching and learning are satisfactory as identified in the results of the school's own lesson observations. Retention in Year 12 is lower than average, however the school provides good advice and guidance for pupils who withdraw. The use of measures of value added is underdeveloped and underused in the self-evaluation of this area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning in mathematics to ensure that better progress is made by all pupils and to further develop numeracy across the curriculum.
- Set challenging targets in core subjects and further increase monitoring of progress by teachers.
- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that teaching methods meet the differing needs of pupils and assessment is used effectively in lessons to reinforce learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. Overall no groups of pupils underachieve. Girls make particularly good progress. Attainment on entry to the school is well below average. Standards in national tests and GCSE examinations nearly all improved in 2005 and the school exceeded its targets. However standards remain below average. Results in mathematics were exceptionally low in 2004 but improved slightly in 2005.

Results at Key Stage 3 improved in 2005 and pupils make satisfactory progress from Year 7 to Year 9. The rate of progress in English improved in 2005. This reflects the school's work to improve the literacy skills of its pupils.

Results in GCSE examinations improved significantly in 2005. The proportion of pupils gaining 5+ A*-C grades increased from 40% to 49% and for 5+ A*-G from 77% to 88%. Arts subjects and sport/physical education produce the best results. Results for mathematics and English improved slightly. In Years 10 and 11 girls make good progress but the progress of boys is lower than average. The progress made in mathematics is not as good as in other subjects because teaching is less effective. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 with more complex needs make good progress.

Standards in the sixth form are in line with those achieved nationally but dipped slightly in 2005. Pupils make good progress because the school provides a broad range of courses that meet individual needs and support pupils well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Moral, social and cultural development is strong. The arts contribute effectively to pupils' developing cultural understanding. Spiritual development remains an area for further development and the school knows this. Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved because a recently created pupil support unit now monitors and intervenes quickly and successfully. Attitudes and behaviour are good. The new team is responsible for tracking behaviour and is beginning to identify trends to inform management decisions.

Pupils have welcomed recent improvement to school meals and are eating more healthily. They behave very well in cramped canteen space. A strong physical education department contributes well to pupils' development of a healthy lifestyle, offering many popular, wide-ranging extra-curricular activities.

Pupils themselves often initiate involvements with the community, which result in good fund-raising and other contributions. With no formal arrangements such as a school council, pupils respond well to opportunities to take individual and collective responsibility.

The school improves pupils' literacy well. This contributes significantly to their preparation for work and future education. Numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are less well developed. Pupils enjoy their education. They feel safe and well cared for. The school recognises their strengths as individuals and personal development is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both the main school and the sixth form. The quality varies between subject areas and this is highlighted by differences in examination results. Lessons in physical education and art are very effective with high levels of learning taking place. Lessons in mathematics are far less effective and often fail to motivate pupils to do their best.

A new system for monitoring of teaching and learning is in place and accurate judgements about the quality of lessons through observations are being made. The school is introducing strategies to deal with identified areas of weakness promptly but some of these are at an early stage of implementation. Teachers have good systems in place for the management of behaviour and to improve pupils' literacy skills, especially in Years 7 to 9. The use of short activities to engage pupils' attention at the start of lessons, such as demonstrations in science or the use of role play is beginning to work well.

Teachers know their subject well and plan carefully. Where teaching has less impact and progress is slower, pupils do not always work on tasks that are appropriate to their ability. Assessment in lessons is not consistently used to reinforce learning. Teachers do not always make sure pupils know at what level they are working or how to improve. Teachers have information about pupils' standards but are not using this fully to inform target setting with pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve at the same rate as other pupils because teaching and learning is enhanced by effective support from teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school offers a satisfactory curriculum. Changes made recently were well researched and based on pupils' needs. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are fully met, enabling them to make satisfactory progress. However, the curriculum does not encourage pupils to fully develop numeracy, ICT and work-related learning. The curriculum is flexible enough to allow groups of pupils to focus on areas of learning that are restricting their progress, such as literacy. This has led to significant improvements in pupils' progress, especially in English.

In Years 10 and 11 the curriculum has developed so that pupils have opportunities to select from a good range of vocational courses. A few pupils, who are not engaged with learning, take part in an alternative curriculum, which includes working off site with local industry. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. The sixth form curriculum is good and meets all pupils' needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Together, they have provided a firm foundation for the recent improvement in pupils' achievement. Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to providing high quality personal support. Information about individuals is used well to identify needs swiftly for the high numbers with low literacy standards. Extensive support to boost these skills is provided effectively from early Year 7. This results in good progress in pupils' understanding of the whole curriculum. The same progress does not yet happen with numeracy because no such dedicated support exists.

Good quality guidance ensures that pupil choices about course options and careers are well informed. Pupils in the sixth form receive considerable personal support and this is very effective in helping them to develop independent learning skills. They are given good advice and guidance about progression routes into higher education. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils facing risks are effective and arrangements to safeguard pupils are good. Outside agencies are well involved in support to improve aspects such as attendance. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent actions taken by the senior leadership team have had a positive effect on the achievement of pupils. Results at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 have almost all improved in 2005. In mathematics, however, the rate of improvement has been much slower with only slight gains made. Not enough management focus or time has been given to ensuring that this subject improves at a better rate. Managers place significant emphasis on the well-being of each individual pupil and the quality of support and care is good and effective in developing self-esteem. Equality of opportunity is promoted very well. The reputation of the school has improved over recent years and it is oversubscribed.

Through effective leadership, the school's work in art has proved highly beneficial to its pupils and has allowed many to become more creative and express themselves more effectively. The roles and responsibilities of managers are clear and understood. Middle managers use data about pupils effectively and procedures for tracking and monitoring progress through the school are now much more efficient.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory and makes good use of feedback from parents and pupils. However in two areas, analysis is too shallow and overgenerous grades are

awarded by the school. Lesson observations undertaken by senior managers are accurate but this evidence is not given enough weight in judging the quality of teaching and learning. Governors are very supportive of the school and the senior leadership team. They know the school well and hold the school to account in most areas. However, they have not challenged the school sufficiently in relation to performance in mathematics.

The school uses its finances prudently and has been able to improve ICT resources in many classrooms. This has had a positive impact on learning. The school has had considerable difficulty in appointing a numeracy coordinator and has not yet resolved this problem. This has impacted on the capacity for improvement in this area.

Since the last inspection, standards have made initially slow but recently more rapid improvement. The school has significantly improved attendance and behaviour and the management structure is now effective and coherent. Middle managers are proving increasingly capable of monitoring and evaluating work in each of their areas. They are held to account to a far higher degree than in previous years. Through increased use of the management tools the school now has in place, such as the lesson observation scheme and improved use of data, it has the capacity to improve. It must, however, pay more attention to pupils' development in numeracy.

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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	3	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	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

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?	2	2

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	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
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	3	
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

Pool Hayes Community School Castle Drive Willenhall West Midlands WV12 4QZ

24 November 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your politeness, co-operation and assistance during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your comments and opinions. We found that your behaviour is nearly always good and this is especially so in lessons. Most of you attend regularly and are punctual and this has improved over recent years. It is very important that you keep this improvement up. You impressed us by the way you eat more healthily and take part in sport.

You all make satisfactory progress but we think you can do better. Your teachers need to help you here and make sure that all lessons challenge each of you to do the best you can. We know you enjoy most lessons, especially in art and PE, and that you learn well in these subjects. Many of you have also recently made improvements in English and we think the school is helping you well here. Your progress in mathematics is less good and this is an area where your school needs to concentrate its attention to ensure that you develop the numerical skills you need for the future.

Your teachers know you well and you have told us that you develop good relationships with them. You told us that the joint sixth form with Sneyd School works well and that you enjoy your studies. Your teachers give you good support and guidance. However, we think they need to make even better use of the information they have about how you are doing at school to push you harder to improve your results. You also need to set yourselves high targets to make sure you do as well as possible.

We heard about many of the activities you are all involved in at school. We were pleased to hear of your involvement in the community, the school plays you take part in and the fund-raising you do. These activities all contribute to the good personal development you make at school and we hope you will continue this good work. Philippa Francis HMI Lead Inspector