



# Pershore High School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116943  
**LEA** Worcestershire  
**Inspection number** 279958  
**Inspection dates** 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Brian Cartwright HMI

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

|                                    |                    |                           |                         |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>              | Comprehensive      | <b>School address</b>     | Station Road            |
| <b>School category</b>             | Community          |                           | Pershore                |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>         | 12 to 18           |                           | Worcestershire WR10 2BX |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>            | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b>   | 01386 552471            |
| <b>Number on roll</b>              | 1237               | <b>Fax number</b>         | 01386 555104            |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>       | The governing body | <b>Chair of governors</b> | Mr Rob Phillips         |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b> | 27 September 1999  | <b>Headteacher</b>        | Mr Clive Corbett        |

|                              |   |                                    |
|------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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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**

Pershore High School is a mixed comprehensive school that gained Technology College status in 2002. Pupils come from a full range of backgrounds, but overall they are relatively advantaged. Attainment on entry in Year 8 is slightly above average. The number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly lower than average and there are low numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds and students for whom English is an additional language. Very few students leave or join the school other than at Year 8.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Pershore High is a good school. A committed team of well qualified staff work hard to ensure students achieve well both academically and personally. The school takes its community links seriously, with a wide local network and impressive international collaboration that enrich teaching and learning. The school has effective provision for the care, guidance and support of students, particularly sixth formers. Generally good teaching is conscientiously received by students, who have good attitudes to learning. Regular assessments and target setting for individual students inform staff and parents of progress, but day-to-day marking could be more consistent and include short-term targets for learners. Students experience a broad curriculum that has been enriched by the technology college specialist status. With limited resources relative to the national averages, the school delivers good value for money.

The school has successfully tackled most of the previous inspection issues through rising standards and significantly enhanced provision for information and communication technology (ICT). A relatively new senior leadership team has maintained the progress made under previous management. They accurately judge overall effectiveness to be good. Governance is sound and ensures the school runs smoothly.

Self-evaluation is secure and includes middle managers in the process, although their judgements are not closely quality assured. Planning does not always identify who has responsibility or who is evaluating the impact, and concrete performance targets are sometimes missing from plans so the impact of initiatives is not always fully measured. However, school leaders have ambitious ideas for the future, particularly in strengthening further the impact of the school in raising aspirations in the locality, and the school does have the necessary capacity to further improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form is good, with outstanding individual guidance and support of students that ensure they make good progress with their learning. It is well led and managed. The curriculum meets the preferences and needs of students well. Students participate fully in the rich activities programme, and also work as mentors to help younger pupils. Students are very committed to the school and appreciative of the commitment of staff. Some teaching involves students in long periods of listening, with little involvement, and so does not always fully meet individual needs or inspire universal enjoyment amongst students. However, the commitment by students to succeed compensates for such moments.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the consistency and rigour of assessment so that teaching is better tailored to learners' needs, and learners know clearly what they should do to improve in the short term.
- Improve school self-review so that evaluation focuses rigorously on the

impact of provision on attainment, ensuring that school improvement planning includes measurable performance targets and identifies personal responsibility.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Overall achievement and standards are good. Standards at Key Stage 3 are well above average. Standards in Key Stage 4 are above average, and substantially higher than at the previous inspection. However, they fall some way short of ambitious specialist college targets except for design and technology. Girls gained much higher standards than boys in 2005 GCSEs, but progress measures show that the gap is not exceptional when compared with students in similar settings nationally. The school has invested in training to ensure such differences are minimised. There is no significant gap in performance between genders in the 2005 KS3 data, or at A-level. Students with learning difficulties are achieving as well as other pupils, thanks to effective planning for their needs and good deployment of skilled learning support assistants.

In 2003 Key Stage 3 national tests, English results were unusually high so value-added measures from Key Stage 3 to 4 in 2005 are below average, but the more important indicator of progress from Key Stage 2 to 4 remains high in 2005 and has been significantly above average for some years. Sixth-form standards are broadly average, and represent good achievement for students, some of whom are accepted onto courses with relatively modest GCSE grades.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall, with the enrichment provided through the school international programme an outstanding feature. Students generally enjoy being at school, many of them emphasising the rich programme of clubs and activities as the reason for this. Their attendance is consistently good throughout the school and there are low levels of unauthorised absence. Students know the school conduct code and live it out effectively. Each student attends two weekly assemblies, but in the remaining three tutorial sessions not every group reflects upon the published thought for the week, so the school is only partially providing the statutory daily act of collective worship. Spiritual development is satisfactory but therefore not as strong as other areas of personal development. The school is reviewing its catering service to ensure further development of healthy eating options, which together with the rich sporting provision ensures students can stay healthy and fit.

Students' behaviour is good overall. There are few exclusions. Students are well behaved in lessons where teaching is at least satisfactory, and around the school they are polite and self-disciplined. Lunch and break times are calm and sociable. Students feel safe in school because bullying is rare and staff deal very well with any incidents. Sixth form students are highly motivated, which allows them to learn well despite not enjoying lessons where note-taking or lecturing dominates.

Students make a good contribution to the community through activities such as fund raising, the youth parliament and international links. Sixth-formers are trained as counsellors to mentor vulnerable younger pupils. Work-related learning opportunities are of good quality for all students, and the community in turn provides valuable work-experience placements. In combination with high standards in English and mathematics, students are developing effective skills that will serve them well in their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

A combination of good student attitudes to learning and their teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that teaching and learning is good overall. Inspectors saw several outstanding lessons alongside many that were good. A small number of inadequate lessons occurred when teaching did not accurately assess and respond to learners' needs. As a result some students took the opportunity to misbehave. The best teaching was characterised by good subject expertise, planning that catered for the needs of all learners, and opportunities for students to assess their own progress. Students enjoy lessons where there is a good variety of teaching methods used, and where they can take some responsibility for their own learning. Use of ICT by students in subjects other than actual ICT lessons is patchy, and less developed than literacy or numeracy.

Parents get regular progress reports. Students have end-of-course targets, and take part in identifying actions needed to achieve them. Inspectors saw good examples of assessment to support student learning; for example, a Year 11 textiles practical concluded with a very good class discussion in which each student was guided to assess their progress, and subsequently plan a personal homework task. Routine marking is satisfactory, but does not consistently provide students with sufficient direction on how to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum throughout the school is broad and balanced and caters for the needs of all pupils well. There are a number of vocational options available to all abilities of students. The Technology College specialism has begun to have a good impact on curriculum provision through increasing use of ICT by teachers. The greatest impact is where teachers have been able to exploit interactive curriculum resources, including assessment software, for example, in science. The requirement for students to study technology slightly constrains the choices available at Key Stage 4, although results in Design Technology GCSE are the highest in the school. Timetable organisation does not permit some subjects to group students by ability, as they would prefer. The curriculum is effectively adapted to meet the needs of some learners for whom an exclusively academic timetable would not maximise their potential. Some more able

students can enter examinations early. The school identifies and monitors the progress of gifted and talented pupils effectively. Sixth-form students enjoy additional courses, such as critical thinking, and are freely able to study the courses of their choice.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that most students participate in during the week, including sixth-formers. A late bus service ensures students from more distant homes are not disadvantaged. The links with other countries are an outstanding feature, and benefit both students and staff with a good insight into international matters.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The school has good systems for monitoring the academic and personal development of learners, with information easily available to all professionals. Regular reports to parents and regular interviews with parents and students ensure good information and advice is on hand to guide students in option choices, sixth-form choices and their future careers. In the sixth form, care, guidance and support is outstanding, because the school knows each student really well, and 'gives us fantastic support'. Underachieving students are swiftly identified and supported.

The school has a good personal, social and health education curriculum to ensure the health and safety of its students. Child protection policies, risk assessment procedures and systematic site safety audits meet requirements. A link governor monitors the 'Every Child Matters' provision.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of staff at all levels is good, promoting good quality of care and education. Day-to-day operations run very well, thanks to diligent adherence to routines and good team leadership. The headteacher is ably supported by a dedicated senior leadership team. The new head of sixth form has a good vision to develop it further by broadening the range of teaching styles, increasing students' independent learning and extending external links. There is good promotion of equal opportunities and lack of discrimination, which enables all students to achieve well. The school's funds and resources are managed effectively. It seeks to get best value from its relatively low income and provides good value for money. Some accommodation is of high quality but there are many temporary classrooms scattered over a large site.

The school has a satisfactory range of information to inform self-evaluation, including surveys of parents and sampling of student views. The school council is represented on the governing body, and governors also have regular contact with the school through links with departments. A small proportion (15%) of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, and most of these had a good opinion of the school. Systematic lesson observations by managers gives good feedback to staff, although

do not explicitly judge lesson quality. Departments conduct sound reviews, but these are not quality assured by senior leaders to ensure consistently good evaluation of the impact of provision on achievement. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. Some aspects lack measurable performance outcomes, do not always assign individual responsibility or identify who is evaluating the outcomes.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors' information about the school is provided by regular comprehensive headteacher reports, but governors rely on the school to interpret performance data. Governors' minutes show effective responses to short-term issues, but less clarity in respect of strategic aims, or of action to take when targets are missed. A new chair of governors is committed to raising standards and developing a fuller understanding of the requirements of technology college status and the wider contribution it can make in the local community.



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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> | <b>School Overall</b> | <b>16-19</b> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### Overall effectiveness

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b> | 2   | 2   |
| 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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   | 2   |
| 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      | 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  | 2   |     |
| 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 |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>  |     |
| 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 |
| <b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>   |     |
| 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 |
| <b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>  |     |
| 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 |
| <b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>                           |     |
| 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**

Pershore High School Station Road Pershore Worcestershire WR10 2BX

14 January 2006

Dear Students

Thank you for your time and consideration during our visit to your school. Your views are most important for ensuring that we get a complete picture of how well the school is providing for your education.

We think that your positive attitudes to learning and your commitment to the school and all of its activities are a key reason why Pershore High School is so good. You work hard to do what teachers ask of you, and as a result of this are making good progress, in all years. Teachers are committed to helping you succeed, and they try hard to give you the best advice and guidance for your future. They also put a huge amount of their own time into the various clubs and trips, which are a really good feature of the school.

To be even better, we think the school should make sure that day-to-day marking gives you clearer advice on things you could do to improve your learning. Staff should continue to increase the opportunities you get for using ICT in different subjects, as well as using it for teaching. We also think you could take a more active part in many lessons, through discussion or written work involving your own words and interpretations, particularly in the sixth form. Finally, we have asked the school to improve the ways it evaluates itself and plans future developments.

The local community also contributes effectively to your success. Their provision for your work-related learning experiences are another factor in giving you a very varied curriculum that is preparing you well for your adult life.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools