



Worcester, Nunnery Wood High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116979
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279967
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector John English RISP

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Spetchley Road
School category	Community		Worcester
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Worcestershire WR5 2LT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01905 356288
Number on roll	1350	Fax number	01905 763482
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Tim Parker
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Alun Williams

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 16	23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	279967

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Nunnery Wood High School is a large comprehensive school on the outskirts of Worcester. It draws students from varied backgrounds, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average. It is a Science Specialist College. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2002, and there have been further recent appointments in key senior positions.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school believes that it is effective and inspectors agree. There are some outstanding features. The leadership provided by the headteacher and the senior managers has successfully built on the strengths of the school as reported in the last inspection and continued to implement changes necessary to keep the school abreast of modern developments. The curriculum is outstanding. The students enjoy school and make good progress, especially in the first three years. In most subjects, pupils achieve at least good standards, but there is too much variation in standards between subjects, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

Students feel safe at school. They are given excellent guidance and support by the school and a wide range of other individuals and organisations, such as local colleges and employers, to help them make the most of their time at school and prepare for their further education or vocation. They grow in confidence and develop the key skills needed for life at work and in their community. The majority have a very positive attitude to school, but there are a minority who exhibit challenging behaviour, which is mostly effectively dealt with by the school. Most parents are highly supportive of the school, and believe it is offering their children a good education. It is effectively managed and resources are well used. The school has made the improvements which were recommended in the last inspection report, with the exception of some improvements in accommodation which were subject to financial constraints. The achievements of the current senior management so far in raising standards demonstrate very good capacity for further improvement. The quality of management of the curriculum leaders varies from outstanding to satisfactory, and is one factor in the variation in standards attained across different subjects. Science College status has had a significant impact in raising standards of management and the pupils' achievement. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve achievement in Years 10 and 11 so it matches the high standards of achievement in the first three years, by improving the performance of the weaker subjects
- develop the capacity of curriculum leaders to monitor and improve the quality of teaching in their areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The students achieve good standards. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average, but by the end of Year 11 is above average. Progress is particularly good in the first three years, making the school one of the highest achieving of all similar schools in the country at this level. This is due to good teaching as well as a good attitude to work on the part of the students. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive particularly good support and make very good progress. High attaining students achieve as well as their peers, although the most

able could achieve more, particularly in the final two years. Boys do not attain as well as girls, but due to decisive action by the school, the gap has been considerably narrowed in the last year, and is now closer to the national figure. Students perform well in most subjects in the first three years, but by the end of Year 11, there is a wider variation in performance in the national examinations, with some very high performing subjects such as science, history and drama, but others, such as music and modern foreign languages, not as successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The students enjoy coming to school and the majority behave sensibly during lessons and at other times. A few older students are immature and misbehave during lessons. Occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour between students are dealt with promptly, and the good levels of supervision of recreational areas results in the students feeling safe and secure at school. The number of exclusions has fallen by over one fifth in the last year and attendance has improved steadily and is now satisfactory.

Students' personal development is good. Assemblies are well used to encourage them to reflect on spiritual issues. Students' social and moral awareness is good. They organise fund-raising activities and an annual party for local senior citizens. They have a good understanding of a range of cultures and traditions, multicultural diversity is celebrated in subjects such as religious education and geography.

The students fully understand the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle and extra-curricular clubs are very popular. They readily take responsibility and contribute much in the school and wider community. The school council is well established and had a role in improving the quality of the food consumed at break and lunch times and in the redecoration of the toilets. The students look after their local environment through litter-picks and the promotion of recycling, although a minority have been responsible for some unnecessary damage in the toilet areas. Students' increasing involvement in the assessment of their own learning and their good basic skills equip them well for future life and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, so students make good overall progress. There is some outstanding teaching and learning, much that is good and very little that is inadequate. Lessons are typified by good relationships between staff and students, and by the teachers' strong subject expertise. Lessons have clear structures and objectives, which provide a strong sense of direction. In the first three years, these positive features are particularly marked and students and teachers know what constitutes high quality work. As a result, many students gain the higher levels in Year 9 tests. In Years 10 and 11, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all subjects,

and good or better in others. Some teachers use assessment information and examination board requirements particularly well, but practice is inconsistent. This results in the level of challenge in lessons varying. For example, very high expectations were seen in drama teaching, but these contrasted with broadly satisfactory levels of challenge in music and French lessons. Teachers give good support to students with learning difficulties, but not all lessons place sufficient demands on their most capable students.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is broad, balanced and meets students' learning needs and aspirations very well. Statutory requirements are met and there is an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Provision for information communication and technology has significantly improved. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well served. Students have a good choice of subjects at GCSE and their core curriculum is well balanced. Innovative curriculum design combined with vision and careful planning has resulted in very good vocational pathways and a well developed 14-19 curriculum. Very strong links with local colleges and employers extend the range of courses available and result in a strong work-related curriculum. Education for health and keeping safe is good. The Science College status has significantly enriched the curriculum and there are many interesting activities, competitions and visits. The range of extra-curricular activities, including sports clubs, trips and visits are outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for child protection are clear and comprehensive. Close links with external specialist agencies, such as the behaviour support service and careers guidance service, ensure that pupils receive high quality support and advice. Although formal health and safety policies are good, during some practical lessons procedures are not rigorously enough enforced, for example, wearing eye protectors. The school has clear and consistently applied policies to ensure good behaviour. This includes a wide range of measures to eliminate bullying, but these have not yet fully overcome some students' reluctance to report problems. Where they do, the school takes decisive action to resolve the issues. Many students and parents were critical of several toilet blocks. Inspectors agree. Some of the cubicles lack paper, locks on the doors and soap. The school has failed to control occasional misuse and damage caused by some students in these toilets.

Systems for monitoring students' progress are outstanding. Most of the students clearly understand how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. They are set challenging targets and mostly achieve them. Parents are fully involved in the process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. He has an ambitious vision for the school, backed by clear strategic planning to bring about improvement. Key to this has been finding the right balance in building on the existing strengths of the school whilst changing the focus to reflect up to date educational thinking and developments. His view is widely shared by the staff. The new senior management team has made an immediate impact, and demonstrated their capacity to lead the school in raising standards. The school improvement processes accurately identify key focus areas.

The quality of management by the curriculum leaders varies from outstanding to satisfactory, but is rapidly improving as they respond to the clear guidance they are receiving. However, the quality of provision in subject areas is still too variable. Curriculum leaders are as yet insufficiently involved in assessing and supporting teaching improvements within their own subjects. The budget is effectively managed, and principles of best value adhered to. Governors constructively challenge the management of the school and also provide strong support. Most parents think the school provides well for their child's education and welfare. A minority have concerns for the standards of behaviour, and the extent to which the views of parents and students are taken into account. Inspectors support the views of the majority of parents. Where poor behaviour occurs, it is dealt with effectively. The school makes a considerable effort to seek the views of the parents and pupils, and takes careful account of them, although this is not always clearly enough made evident to them. The Science College status has had a positive impact on management and standards in the school, and the extensive links with many schools and community organisations are bringing benefits to many areas of school life.

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	2	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

Nunnery Wood High School Spetchley Road Worcester WR5 2LT

25 November 2005

Dear Students

Thank you for the pleasant way you received us during the recent inspection. I am especially grateful to those of you who gave up some of your time to come to interviews. Inspectors were pleased with the school: most things are working well and even where there are improvements to be made the headteacher and other staff have already begun to take action.

The school's main strengths are

- good overall progress is made by the vast majority of students
- standards in Year 9 SATs are well above average
- GCSE standards are rising
- teaching and learning are good
- the majority of students behave well and show positive attitudes, but a few have poor attitudes, and do not treat others with enough respect
- the school tries very hard to collect and act on your views
- the headteacher and senior teachers give very clear leadership
- governors contribute well to the running of the school
- the curriculum is exceptionally good and prepares you well to achieve your ambitions when you leave school.

The things the school should do to improve further are

- ensure the progress you make in Years 10 and 11 is as good as the rapid gains students make in Years 7 to 9; this means raising GCSE standards in several subjects
- make sure that all subjects leaders are fully involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their departments.

Yours sincerely

CJ English (Additional Inspector)