



# Tuxford School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122882  
**LEA** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 281368  
**Inspection dates** 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Bob Roberts LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Landa Grove
<b>School category</b>	Community		NG22 0JG
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01777 870001
<b>Number on roll</b>	1262	<b>Fax number</b>	01777 872155
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Michael Jones
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Christopher Pickering

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	281368

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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

Tuxford School is an 11-19, single site, mixed rural comprehensive school. It is above average size, having 1,262 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection, including 238 in the sixth form. It serves the town of Tuxford in Nottinghamshire and the surrounding area, with pupils coming from over 30 primary schools. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below national averages. Over 95% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are very few whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The school was designated as a specialist technology college in 2002.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. This judgement agrees with the school's own view of itself. The school has good leadership, not only from the headteacher, but from the senior and middle managers and governors. Indeed, there is a flourishing culture of ambition, shared leadership and professional development that has led to exceptionally high staff morale. What gives this morale an extra edge at present is the excitement generated by the imminent move to completely new buildings. The school has coped very well with inadequate buildings for some time. Pupils come to the school with broadly average levels of attainment. Their overall progress and achievements are satisfactory. Although in some subject areas achievement is good, particularly those associated with the technology specialism, standards in English need to be improved and sustained following disappointing results in 2005 at GCSE. The school has been vigorously addressing this issue. Teaching overall is good, and there is a concerted drive to improve. The enjoyment that pupils derive from coming to school is clear not only from the exceptional levels of attendance but from the enthusiasm they show in classroom and their participation in the many activities available to them. Their behaviour is good. They appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. Their personal development is outstanding. The issues raised in the last inspection have been thoroughly dealt with, although more work is needed to develop the use of assessment. There needs to be a greater degree of consistency between faculties with regard to their quality assurance measures, but overall the capacity of the school to realise its ambitions is very good. It offers good value for money.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good. This is because the sixth form teachers' enthusiasm, and the way they give of their own time to pupils, creates very good working relations. Students speak highly of the support and guidance they receive, from well before they actually enter the sixth form, during the thorough induction process, and when they are considering their future pathways. Their attendance and progress is monitored very carefully, and students are well aware of their learning goals. Many aspects of the life of the sixth form are integrated within the whole school, adding considerably to the positive atmosphere that exists. There is an excellent range of opportunities to broaden experience and to develop personally. Teaching is good, promoting opportunities for students to become confident, mature learners. The curriculum is good, although the emphasis is very much on advanced level courses. The options available will shortly broaden a great deal further through closer ties with a local college. The progress students make on their courses is satisfactory. Although the boys did not do as well at A level in 2005 as they should have done, the standards achieved overall are in line with national expectations. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

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

- Continue to implement and monitor the action plan to improve and sustain progress and standards in English. - Develop a greater degree of consistency between the faculties of the school in the measures used to monitor and improve the quality of provision. - Develop and disseminate further the school project on how assessment can be used both to inform pupils about what they need to do to produce good work and to check their progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with average levels of attainment. By the time they take the national tests at the end of Year 9, pupils are achieving standards that are good. There is some significant variation between the core subjects in the progress they make. In mathematics it is usually good, in science very good, but in English pupils' progress is less than satisfactory. At GCSE, the school had a very good year in 2004. However, in 2005 the standards overall dropped back to being satisfactory. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more good passes dropped from 69% to 57%, in line with the average national figure. Results in a small number of subjects were disappointing. This was particularly the case in English, in which progress had clearly been poor. In many subjects, however, results in 2005 were good, reflecting good progress in Years 10 and 11, especially those subjects linked closely to the school's specialist technology status: mathematics, science and design and technology. Girls did better than boys, by about the same margins as is the case nationally. Girls did particularly well in art and history, boys in French and design and technology. Both sexes did relatively poorly in English, but especially the boys. In the sixth form, the progress pupils make is also satisfactory. Their achievements, as indicated by the average point scores for each candidate and for each examination entry, are very much in line with national expectations. In recent years the standards have been improving at a rate that has exceeded the rate nationally. This improvement has taken place at the same time as the numbers of pupils in the sixth form has been increasing. The school has a well-established system for setting itself challenging targets for overall performance. Pupils are well aware of their own personal targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are also set targets and make satisfactory progress through the school.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy their education a great deal. They rightly view it as a safe, caring community. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to work. They respect one another and their teachers and speak warmly about school. Their attendance and punctuality are excellent. Pupils value the good opportunities they have to express their views, for example, through the School Forum. They feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. Pupils'

spiritual and cultural development is extremely good and enhanced by frequent opportunities to appreciate the customs and beliefs of other cultures. Their moral and social well-being is also nurtured extremely well. There is excellent provision for pupils to adopt and develop healthier lifestyles. The lunch menus feature a good range of healthy choices and pupils have access to drinking water in lessons. Pupils are aware of the school's strong policy on bullying and the rare incidents of bullying are swiftly and effectively dealt with. There is a culture of praise and celebration of achievement which encourages pupils to develop confidence in their abilities and talents. Support for the most vulnerable pupils is a particular strength of the school. They feel secure and know where to seek help if they have any problems. Pupils are prepared well to participate in their communities and readily support fund-raising events, raising significant sums of money for charitable causes. Overall, the school is a very happy community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall, both in main school and in the sixth form. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well. They explain the learning targets to pupils and in the best lessons they summarise and review at the end to check what has been achieved. Teachers support and challenge individuals effectively. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and respond positively, behaving well and showing interest in what they are asked to do. Teachers build and sustain good relationships with pupils, who expect to work hard and produce their best. The contribution of teaching assistants is particularly effective in helping pupils with identified learning needs to benefit from lessons. In the most effective lessons, teachers question pupils skilfully and help them to develop their own understanding of difficult ideas. Similarly, pupils learn well when given the chance to work together to research information or seek solutions to problems for themselves. Since the last inspection the school has developed a very robust system for collecting assessment information about each pupil, for setting test and examination targets and for monitoring the progress of individuals. This is used very effectively to identify and actively support the learning of pupils who are falling behind. Good work has been started on how assessment strategies can be used, in an ongoing way, to inform pupils about what they need to do to produce good work and to check out their achievements. This initiative needs to be developed and refined further and used more widely across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good across the main school and in the sixth form. The issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed so that all statutory requirements are now met. The curriculum is carefully thought out, well planned and resourced. All pupils, regardless of their differing aptitudes and capabilities, are catered for and they are

fully supported to achieve their best outcomes. In the lower school, art, music, drama, and dance are taught as separate subjects each week giving pupils a rich experience in the expressive arts. The recently introduced 'Learning to Learn' programme helps pupils to understand how they learn and to try out new ways of learning that they can use in any subject area. There is the opportunity for all pupils to study two foreign languages after the first year. In Key Stage 4 there is a wide range of courses at different levels. These are provided in school, in a local college and in the work place. Pupils are guided onto a pathway of study which interests them and best suits them to reach their potential. This is also true in the sixth form. Most students study advanced level courses. A good range of academic courses is offered, with a few vocational alternatives, and this range includes innovative distance learning programmes in Law and Philosophy. Additionally, there is provision for some students to take basic skills and more work related courses at the local college. The technology status of the school has enabled more use of computers in lessons and provided opportunities for pupils to develop specific skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Enrichment activities within and outside school are extensive. They are popular with pupils and help them to extend their learning beyond the classroom.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is outstanding. All the requirements for child protection are firmly in place and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. The management of a very wide range of support services available to the pupils, particularly those in the main school, is clear and coherent. The procedures for identifying pupils who may be at risk are highly effective. The school monitors their progress carefully, identifies problems quickly and uses the school's own expertise and that of external agencies well, successfully providing appropriate support. Possible barriers to achievement and well-being are thoroughly analysed, resulting in effective action. The impact of support is evaluated in order to plan and to refine future actions. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in work-related learning. They receive comprehensive careers guidance and are well informed about choices of courses and career paths.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses: although inspectors could not support the school's views on achievement and standards, in other respects inspectors felt that the school had under-valued itself. The headteacher has an extremely clear vision for the school's further development and gives it purposeful direction. Leaders and managers at all levels are fully committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning and to raising standards. Areas of underperformance, such as English, have been identified and vigorously addressed. There is good evidence that standards will be much improved in this summer's exams. However, there is inconsistency in the way that the various

faculties carry out quality assurance. Staff morale is very high. The leadership places great emphasis on the professional development of staff and on promoting leadership qualities. It ensures equality of opportunity and promotes high levels of personal development in the young people in its care. Parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school's leadership. The school manages its sixth form innovatively, as an integral part of provision for 14 to 19 year-olds. The sixth form is well led and managed. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. They carry out their responsibilities effectively and conscientiously and with a considerable degree of innovation. They strive constantly to develop their role of critical friend. Finances are well managed. Well qualified specialist staff are used to good effect, and the school provides good value for money. All the issues raised at the last inspection have been effectively resolved. The school has benefited considerably from specialist technology status. It has forged excellent links with other schools. Partnership arrangements with other agencies and with the local community are excellent. The curriculum in ICT and technology is much improved, as is the provision of computers and other equipment. Remaining problems of accommodation will be solved by the new building to be opened early next year. Leadership and management have very good capacity to take the school further forward.





## 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>
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### 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?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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>	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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

### 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>	1	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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	2	
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**

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all, however, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your courtesy and cooperation during our visit. You were an enormous credit to the school. The inspection found a great deal of which the school can be proud. There is an exceptionally positive and happy atmosphere at the school. No doubt this has something to do with your imminent move to completely new buildings! But the real reason for this atmosphere, we feel, is that you have an excellent group of staff, both teachers and support staff, who are very committed to their work and to your care and guidance. It is rare to find pupils enjoying their learning so much. Your behaviour is good, your attendance, and the ways in which you contribute to the life of the school are excellent. The links between the school and the local community are very good. We were impressed by the activities which take place outside the classroom and the benefits these have for you. Your parents, who sent in their views to us in large numbers, are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and supportive of it. The academic progress you all make at the school is satisfactory at all levels. In many subjects it is good, but the results do need to improve in English in particular. There are other ways that we feel the school could improve further: for instance, the way in which your progress is assessed and fed back to you could be improved, and the ways the faculties check on things could be more consistent. In conclusion, our view is that you are going to a good school, and, when you move to your new buildings, you have a fantastic opportunity to contribute to it becoming even better. We wish you all well.