



# The National School, a C of E Technology College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 122897  
**LEA** NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 281370  
**Inspection dates** 8 February 2006 to 9 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. David Martin LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Annesley Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		NG15 7DB
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01159635667
<b>Number on roll</b>	1066	<b>Fax number</b>	01159638955
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Shirley Robbins
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. David Shannon

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 8 February 2006 - 9 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281370
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The National Church of England Technology College is an 11-18 Voluntary Aided secondary school in Hucknall, but drawing pupils from a wide geographical area. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. Sixth-form provision is shared with another local 11-18 school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well below average as is the number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school is designated by the local authority as an inclusive school for physically handicapped pupils. Pupils are mainly of White British background, with a small proportion of pupils from other ethnic heritages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

Whilst the National School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils it is not as effective as it should be. The senior managers' monitoring of the school's work, particularly with regard to learning, teaching and the raising of attainment, is inadequate. Their evaluation of the school's overall effectiveness is over-generous, especially in terms of the pupils' achievement. In addition, there is a lack of effective communication and confidence between senior managers, the governing body and some staff. Consequently, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to leadership and management. Standards of attainment are above average and the progress made by pupils is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. The achievement of students in the sixth form is satisfactory. Overall, the school sets appropriate targets for its pupils and students, which most achieve. However, the use of assessment information and support for learning are inconsistent. The strong Christian ethos of the school is effectively promoted. Pupils' personal development is good. Attendance is above average and behaviour in and around school is good but attitudes to learning vary. The proportion of exclusions is below the local and national averages. The quality of pastoral and personal support for pupils is a particular strength. Procedures to secure the safety, health and fitness of pupils are good, but opportunities for them to have their views heard are limited. Teaching and learning in the main school are satisfactory overall. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of more challenging and stimulating approaches. Teaching in the sixth form is good. Assessment practice and the use of data have improved recently. The curriculum is good overall and satisfactory in the sixth form. Technology College status has brought new opportunities and partnerships. The school offers wide-ranging extracurricular activity. The school has the capacity to improve. There is sufficient strength in the teaching staff to improve teaching and learning, and individuals often manage their area of the school effectively. Improvements have been made in some important areas identified at the last inspection, notably the accommodation and the curriculum. Strengths in pastoral care have been fostered and maintained. Financial management is thorough and the school provides sound value for money. Governors have pledged to work with the senior management team to make significant progress in the areas of weakness.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that the effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The sixth form is smaller than average because of a wide range of Post-16 opportunities in the area. Consequently the sixth form is subsidised from the main school budget and therefore does not provide satisfactory value for money. The students' average points score at A Level increased significantly in 2005 following a

period of decline. The breadth of the academic curriculum has been increased through a partnership with a neighbouring school. Attempts to balance provision, by introducing vocational courses, were unsuccessful because of the low uptake by students. Targets are set and reviewed and students appreciate the support provided to enable them to make progress. In Year 12 there is a successful 'Young Enterprise' programme and a number of sixth formers contribute to the school through sports leadership. Students have their own Sixth Form Council, which organises social and fund-raising events well, with the aim of improving their facilities.

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

- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, particularly learning and teaching, in order to raise pupils' achievement and attainment. - Restore effective communication and confidence between senior managers, the governing body and staff in order to improve team working. - Raise achievement through the informed use of assessment information to track the pupils' progress and involve pupils in setting targets. - Improve the quality of learning and achievement by ensuring that good practice is shared more consistently.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The school assesses pupils' achievement as good but inspectors judge it to be satisfactory overall. Pupils enter the school with attainment which is above average. They make satisfactory progress and maintain above average standards in national tests and examinations in Years 9 and 11. Standards in the GCSE and GNVQ examinations in 2005 varied significantly. There was particular success in modern foreign languages and subjects where there were a small number of entries, such as the separate biology, chemistry and physics courses. However, the overall percentage of pupils gaining higher A\* and A grades was below average. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Achievement and standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. Over the last few years results in the sixth form have declined from well above average in 2002 to below average in 2004. However, a provisional analysis of the results for 2005 indicates this is being reversed and students made satisfactory progress between Years 11 and 13. Overall, the school sets appropriate targets for its pupils and students, which most achieve. However, the use of assessment information to raise expectations, set individual targets for pupils and students, and improve achievement, is inconsistent across subjects and faculties.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social, cultural and particularly spiritual development is very good. Attendance has been above the national average for the last three years. Behaviour in and around school is generally good. Pupils' attitudes to learning vary. They show the most enthusiasm when they are actively

involved, are expected to learn independently and take some responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are less keen when tasks are routine and require little thought. Consequently, pupils have mixed views about school. On the whole they enjoy coming to school and try to do well. They appreciate the academic and pastoral support they are given by their form tutors in regular individual reviews. They are more enthusiastic about school where this pastoral support is effective and relevant to their needs. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities to stay physically fit through the good range of sporting extracurricular activities provided. They cooperate well with the school and appreciate opportunities to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Although there is a school council, some pupils feel they do not have sufficient opportunity to make their views known, or have them represented. Pupils are acquiring good skills in literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technology (ICT) to equip them for their future lives and the world of work. This is supported effectively through the development of enterprise and workplace skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning in the main school are satisfactory overall. This is reflected in the satisfactory progress made by pupils as they advance through the school. Teaching and learning in the sixth form are good and are raising achievement. The best teaching motivates and engages pupils through the effective use of praise and encouragement. Teachers plan their lessons well, and their subject knowledge is good. Working relationships between teachers and pupils are good overall, particularly where there are high expectations and levels of challenge. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well. Lessons which are no more than satisfactory are too teacher-led and pupils are insufficiently involved in their learning. The school has identified the need to use assessment information more effectively to improve teaching and learning. Marking is satisfactory, and getting better. Consequently, pupils are becoming increasingly aware of what they should do to improve. The monitoring of teaching and learning, through line management, does not enable the identification of good practice to be shared sufficiently well. A voluntary staff working group is currently reviewing the school's approach to improving teaching and learning. The evaluation of this work by senior managers is not effective.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Curriculum provision is good overall and satisfactory in the sixth form. This is consistent with the school's own judgements. The Curriculum meets statutory requirements. Technology College status has brought about new opportunities and partnerships.

The school's ICT curriculum has benefited from investment and now meets requirements. The school shares its specialism with neighbouring schools and is particularly successful in establishing partnerships with its main primary feeder schools. The engineering course, run in collaboration with a nearby college, responds well to local needs. There is work experience for all pupils in Year 10. Within the curriculum, opportunities for gifted and talented pupils are provided in the study of separate sciences in Year 11 and German from Year 8. The school offers wide-ranging extracurricular activity. Innovative developments include the use of video conferencing to link technology teaching to partner schools and to receive tuition at a distance in law, as well as government and politics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The school shows a good level of care, guidance and support for pupils. The quality of pastoral and personal support for pupils is a particular strength in the main school. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are clear and thorough and staff are fully informed. Behaviour management is effective and promotes the overall good standards of behaviour. The school has a policy of excluding pupils only as a last resort and endeavours to solve difficulties within school. The proportion of exclusions is below the local and national averages. Support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils are supported effectively through the school's strong links with external specialist agencies. There is a good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education to support effectively the pupils' personal development. Academic guidance is sound overall. There is good practice in monitoring and advising pupils of their achievement, but this quality is not yet consistent throughout the school.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 4**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The leadership of the school is judged inadequate in two key aspects of its work. Firstly, the monitoring of the work of the school, especially learning, teaching and the raising of attainment, is weak. There is neither reference in the school development plan as to who will monitor the activities identified, nor indications as to how progress on these actions will be checked. This issue was identified at the last inspection and has only recently been addressed with any vigour. Secondly, there has been a breakdown in communication and confidence between the senior management team, the governors and some staff. The management of subject leaders by senior managers is neither frequent nor planned. As a result, heads of department are insufficiently supported in their roles. This means that the recent developments in learning and teaching are not consistently promoted across the school, leading to inconsistency of practice. Nevertheless, there is sufficient ability and drive within the teaching staff to

move the school forward. The schools' self-evaluation, though broadly accurate, lacks real depth of understanding in key areas. An example of this is in the senior managers' misunderstanding in terms of achievement. Comparisons with average scores led them to an evaluation of achievement as good, whilst the progress made by pupils shows that achievement is no better than satisfactory. The governing body has accepted that there have been occasions when the senior managers have failed to act consistently as a team. This has led to poor communication and some breakdown in confidence between governors, senior managers and some teaching staff. Governors accept their share of responsibility in failing to monitor some key areas of the school's work. Despite this, they are highly supportive, have an efficient committee structure and ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements. Significant improvements have been made in some important areas identified at the last inspection, notably the accommodation and some weaker curriculum provision, including ICT and art. However, many of the issues identified in the last report have only recently been addressed. These include the use of data, assessment and pupil target-setting.



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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>
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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>	4	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
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	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>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	3

<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>	4	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
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	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

<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**

Thank you for making the inspection team very welcome at your school. We certainly enjoyed seeing some of your lessons, looking at your work and above all talking with you about your own experiences whilst at the school. We are now able to tell you what we found. Many of your lessons were well planned and interesting, with a variety of activities designed to involve you in the work and to give you opportunities to take responsibility. You clearly enjoyed these lessons, made good progress and learned a great deal. In the interviews and in discussions you told us that some lessons were less interesting, particularly when there was too much copying from textbooks or the board. We did see lessons that were like this as well, but on balance we thought that learning was satisfactory overall. In the end of Year 9 tests and those taken in Year 11, your achievement was satisfactory, with most of you making reasonable progress from where you started in Year 7. If all lessons were as good as the best that we saw, we feel that you could achieve even better results. Other strengths we found in the school were: - Attendance is better than in the average school, and behaviour is good. - You are well cared for whilst at school, and are aware of the importance of healthy eating and of keeping fit. - The Christian message of the school helps you to understand the needs of others, as you show in your charity work and your care and respect for each other. - The school offers many opportunities, not only in lessons but also in clubs and activities. We believe that there are ways in which the school can improve: - The adults who manage your school should make sure that learning is always interesting and challenging by checking that it is good in all lessons. - The school should involve you all further in understanding and agreeing your own targets, so that you know what to do in order to improve. - The adults who manage the school should make sure that your views are heard and acted upon, and that the School Council has an opportunity to take all pupils' suggestions forward. Remember that you have an important part to play in improving your school through your active involvement, and by maintaining your good conduct and positive attitudes. We wish you all the very best in the future.