



Wrockwardine Wood Arts College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123572
LEA Telford and Wrekin
Inspection number 281508
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Faysal Mikdadi Al

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	New Road
School category	Community		Wrockwardine Wood
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Telford, Shropshire TF2 6JZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01952 613594
Number on roll	988	Fax number	01952 615825
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr Richard Williams

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006	Inspection number 281508
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Wrockwardine Wood Arts College is a larger than average school in north Telford. It has a performing arts specialist status. Students are mainly White British, with a small number coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. Students come from the local area, which has some pockets of substantial deprivation. The college has a higher than average number of students with learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Wrockwardine is a satisfactory college and provides satisfactory value for money. Its leaders' judgement that its overall effectiveness is satisfactory is accurate. The new principal has had a significant impact on improving provision across the college. Monitoring and evaluation ensures that leaders and governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve students' progress and achievement. Last summer's test and GCSE results were broadly average. There was underachievement in the end of Year 9 tests in mathematics and science and in the GCSE mathematics examinations. The school's actions since then have been successful and the result has been improved standards, especially in mathematics and science. This means that the college is able to move forward securely and make continued improvement.

Teaching is satisfactory and has improved. The impact of this has begun to show through in improved standards, and students make satisfactory progress. Despite these improvements, teachers' assessments do not always tell students what they need to do to improve their work.

Parents, students and staff speak very highly of the changes put in place since the arrival of the new principal. Students' behaviour is improving and they say that they are listened to more. Personal development is satisfactory with some good features. The leadership team has created a strong ethos for improvement. This has resulted in improved links with parents and other stakeholders, including a close working relationship with the local authority. Although curriculum provision is satisfactory, not all students in Years 10 and 11 are taught information and communication technology (ICT) as required by the National Curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the strategies used to improve standards in mathematics and science are extended to all subject areas.
- Ensure that all teachers show students how to improve their work when it is marked or assessed.
- Ensure that all students in Years 10 and 11 are taught ICT.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the college with average standards. The Year 9 national test results in 2005 were broadly average, with standards in mathematics lower than those in English and science. More able students underachieved in mathematics and to some extent in science, and this was mainly the outcome of staffing difficulties and ineffective preparation of students for the tests. Achievement in English was satisfactory in 2005.

GCSE results in 2005 were also broadly average. Students' achievement was satisfactory overall although it varied too much between subjects. Good achievement in English, design and technology, French, history and music came from good teaching and the high quality coursework students produced. In mathematics, students underachieved. Other pockets of underachievement were linked with staffing difficulties in combined science, ineffective teaching in German and incomplete coursework in business studies.

In response to the 2005 results in both key stages and as a consequence of its specialist status, the college introduced a broad range of strategies to raise standards and to ensure that students meet the targets set for them. These include examination changes, providing on-line revision and student mentoring. Recent mock examination results show these steps to have been successful with students making sound progress towards their targets, especially in mathematics and science. Improvements in the systematic tracking of students' progress to identify and redress potential underachievement are beginning to bear fruit.

A few students gained very few or no GCSE passes last summer. New strategies to include all students in accredited courses have been successful and all current Year 11 students are on track to gain pass grades. Students with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress throughout the college

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The opportunities provided by the college's specialist status in performing arts have allowed students to take part in many cultural activities. As a result, students have many chances to work together and to improve their social skills. Most of them show consideration and respect for each other. The large numbers who participate in performing arts events also work well with pupils in local primary schools. They take pride in the high quality of college productions and a large number of students took part in a particularly successful performance during the inspection.

Applications to join the new student council show awareness of issues that matter to their peers although it is early days to make a judgement on the full impact of this development. Older students care well for Year 7 classes, acting responsibly as prefects. Students in all years raise funds for charities. They enjoy many aspects of the college such as opportunities to perform in music and drama or to take part in sporting activities. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Behaviour is satisfactory and parents feel that it is improving. Falling levels of exclusion reflect a declining incidence of unacceptable behaviour, although students are still concerned about the level of bullying. The college is aware of this concern and is working closely with the student council to create anti-bullying strategies. Students work well together when given chances to do so. They act responsibly to keep themselves safe. They take part in sport, understand the need to keep healthy and know about maintaining a healthy diet. The proportion of students staying in education after Year 11 is currently low, but steps to tackle this have already had an impact on further education college applications.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory because teachers are following an agreed structure to each lesson, which includes setting intended learning outcomes, and encouraging students to respond more regularly and to participate actively. The result of the many recent improvements is that there is a better proportion of good teaching, for example, in English, design and technology, French, history and music. In the better lessons, the good pace keeps students engaged and activities are well matched to the needs of all students. For example in a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher was able to engage students in a discussion of complex issues of stereotyping, leading them almost seamlessly onto an excellent analysis of two poems from their examination anthology.

Students say that they enjoy their lessons. They work constructively and independently. The result is that they learn effectively especially when tasks set match their differing abilities. This happens particularly with students with learning difficulties and disabilities and a small number of students with behavioural difficulties. Their learning is further enhanced by effective support from teaching assistants as well as from members of the senior leadership team who mentor them daily. Although these improvements in teaching have shown through in the improved standards, especially in mathematics and science, the impact has not fully permeated the whole college.

Occasionally, teaching is less secure. One shortcoming is an occasional lack of variety in teaching strategies. Some teachers take too little account of the needs of individual students, especially those of high achievers, who are consequently not sufficiently challenged. This sometimes results in poor behaviour, leading to a lack of adequate progress.

Teachers' assessment feedback to students is inconsistent between subjects. It is not always clear to students what they need to do to improve their work further. The result is that many students do not take on responsibility for their own learning because they do not know what to do next. Monitoring of teaching by departments is inconsistent but recent work by the leadership team has provided a clear strategy for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The college's curriculum is satisfactory overall, although the National Curriculum requirement to teach ICT is not met in Years 10 and 11. In Years 7, 8 and 9, a varied pattern of setting in English, mathematics, science, geography, history and modern foreign languages results in subject leaders not being able to group pupils successfully in every case. This hinders teachers in matching work set to the varying abilities within each group. There is good access to the arts curriculum, as all students participate in art, drama, music and performing arts on a weekly basis.

In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum does not fully cater for the needs of all learners, as there are currently few opportunities for students to follow courses that match their differing abilities. However, the impact of the college's specialist status as an Arts College is evident in the range of specialist and vocational courses available to students in Years 10 and 11. These courses provide clear progression routes into further education, strengthened by the college's links with a number of further education providers of performing arts courses. The enrichment programme provides support for students' achievement through a range of booster classes. Many students take part in and enjoy activities in sport and in art and design. These activities provide opportunities for students to develop self-confidence, to work with others and become involved in the community and with professional organisations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory overall with some developing strengths. Staff take pains to ensure that students are safe, with child protection procedures and risk assessments fully in place. Students are taught about key risks and given opportunities to participate in particularly good sporting activities. Healthy food and drinks are provided at breakfast and lunch times, with a high attendance at breakfast helping students to maintain their concentration in lessons. The college works well with external agencies to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is collaboration between the college and the local authority, which is giving very good support to subject areas.

Efforts to improve support for students with behavioural problems have been praised by students, parents and members of the community, and these have reduced the level of exclusion. Elections for the new student council have given students a voice in the running of the college. Advice about choices of courses in Year 10 and on leaving college is good, as the college has recognised and acted to improve the proportion of students continuing in education after the age of 16. The value of the good work experience for all in Years 10 and 11 is reinforced by its use as a context for coursework in short GCSE citizenship. However, inconsistent subject guidance about how students can improve their work in order to reach their targets has not yet been fully addressed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has clearly been through a period where there was inadequate progress and declining standards. The insight of the new principal and an extended leadership team are moving the school forward quickly and leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The main successes have been in raising staff morale, raising expectations across the college, and embedding the analysis of test and examination data to improve planning and set realistic targets. These and other measures are already having an impact on standards. Targets are also well on the way to being met in GCSE mathematics and science. The college is aware that it has not yet met the targets in

its performing arts specialism and has not measured the impact of its arts college status on standards. Because the leadership team is new, much of the other promising work that leaders have done since the arrival of the new principal has not yet had time to have a clear impact on every area of the college's work.

Senior leaders monitor the work of the college closely and their judgements about the quality of the school's provision are accurate. The newly appointed learning directors for each key stage are beginning to track students' progress, although it is too early yet to gauge the impact of their work on raising standards. Heads of departments have also begun to monitor progress within their subject, with the result that improvements in standards are showing through.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is fully supportive of the senior leadership team. It has close links with each subject area and know the college well. The improvements, and an increased community confidence in the school and its leadership, indicate that the school is securely placed to move forward.

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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

Thank you very much for being so welcoming and helpful to us during our recent visit to your college. We enjoyed talking to you. We particularly enjoyed attending the production of Disco Inferno. Your performance was really impressive.

We agree with your positive views of the improvements made since the arrival of the new principal. The result has been that you are making consistently satisfactory progress and, in some areas, you are making good progress. Your student council is successful in giving you a chance to express your views and to help improve things around the college.

To keep the improvements made to date going and to make things even better, we have made the following suggestions about what the college should do next.

- The college should ensure that the improvements made in standards in mathematics and science are extended to all subject areas.
- When they mark your work, teachers should tell you what you need to do to improve it next time.
- All of you in Years 10 and 11 should be given the chance to improve your information and communication technology (ICT) skills further.

Once again, thank you for being so helpful to us in our work. We wish you the very best for the future.