



# Ercall Wood Technology College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 123595  
**LEA** Telford and Wrekin  
**Inspection number** 281516  
**Inspection dates** 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Meg Buckingham HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Golf Links Lane
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Wellington
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Telford, Shropshire TF1 2DT
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 417800
<b>Number on roll</b>	873	<b>Fax number</b>	01952 417803
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr J Ferrington
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 September 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Owen-Reece

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 1 March 2006 - 2 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 281516
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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

Ercall Wood Technology College is a medium-sized, mixed comprehensive school, situated in Wellington, Shropshire. Pupils enter the school with results that are generally below average. However, the proportions of pupils who receive free school meals and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are both above the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is, at four times the national average, exceptionally high. There is a Learning Support Unit within the school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups matches the national average. The school has Technology College status and approval for a specialism in vocational education. It has been accredited with Leading Edge status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Ercall Wood is an effective school with exceptional features in some aspects of the provision. It provides good value for money. The inspection team confirms the school's evaluation of its provision in all areas except for some aspects of care, guidance and support, which the school judged as outstanding. The inspection team judged this to be good. Standards of attainment are near to the national average but vary between subjects, with weaknesses in all core subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make particularly good progress. From when pupils enter to when they leave, the school adds very high additional value to their education and their achievements are good. Good teaching, a broad curriculum and effective structures for support and guidance all contribute to pupils' good personal development and progress. The school provides a wide range of courses but not all statutory requirements are met. The best marking of work clearly indicates what pupils need to do to improve but it is not all consistently as thorough as this. The relatively newly formed senior management team is strong under the effective and visionary leadership of the headteacher, although the quality of middle managers is not consistent. The school has a clear view of its strengths and has accurately identified those areas that require improvement. Appropriate action is being taken to address these matters, including careful monitoring and evaluation to tackle inconsistencies that exist in some areas. The main issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed. There is very good capacity to improve further.

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

- Ensure that all elements of the statutory curriculum are provided.
- Raise pupils' standards, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that marking in all subjects is of the highest standard.
- Support middle managers so that they are all as effective as the best.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities and there is a significantly higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than the national average. Last year's Key Stage 3 tests in the core subjects of English and science were below the national average, and well below in mathematics. However, within the context of the school and considering some pupils' prior attainment, pupils achieved well. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 4 is just above average. Pupils attain higher than average results, for example, in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and English language. The school undertakes detailed analysis of test and examination results, followed by well focused intervention in less successful subjects, such as mathematics, music, drama and geography.

Good teaching, a well chosen curriculum and targeted support and guidance enable pupils to make better than average progress from Year 7 to the end of Key Stage 4. This is within the context of there being an exceptionally high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Some pupils for whom English is an additional language require extra help to improve their competency in language skills so they can achieve even more. These pupils have been identified and focused support is provided from within the school and from other agencies. All pupils make good progress. This performance reflects the school's inclusive nature.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils benefit from opportunities for physical exercise and many participate in the good range of sporting activities, contributing to healthy lifestyles. They mature well in the moral, social and cultural aspects of their lives. The school is aware that pupils' spiritual development, whilst not unsatisfactory, is capable of improvement.

Pupils show practical consideration for their own and others' safety. They develop the social skills and personal qualities they need for adult life. The effective provision for work related learning contributes to preparing pupils for future economic well-being. The school council and other opportunities allow pupils to be involved in the life of the school, helping to make decisions. A pupils' focus group has enabled them to engage in the improvement of the anti-bullying policy. Pupils say that they feel secure at school. Pupils of all ages get on very well with each other as they eat their lunch and play games.

Attendance is satisfactory, being close to the national average for secondary schools. The level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Although behaviour is good in most lessons and around the school generally, the number of fixed term exclusions is high. The school admits that a relatively small number of pupils occupy a disproportionate amount of senior managers' time. The school has revised its discipline policy with a view to reducing the small amount of unacceptable behaviour. The school's collection and analysis of information on attendance and behaviour enables effective monitoring and intervention.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. This is because instructions and information given to pupils are clear and teachers have high expectations that pupils listen carefully and behave appropriately. Questions are carefully put and, as a result, pupils focus on what they have learned as they develop and reinforce their knowledge and understanding. Teachers know their pupils well, develop good relationships with them and they use

ICT effectively as they plan and present lessons. As a result, most pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. Occasionally, less effective teaching results in pupils not behaving as well as they should. In these instances, activities are not always accurately matched to the needs of all pupils and insufficient progress is made in the lesson.

In the very best lessons, in English and science, pupils are given very good information on how to reach their targets and predicted grades. 'Target setting days' have recently been introduced and these have involved pupils, parents and teachers working effectively together to devise individual targets for learning for all pupils. In addition, all departments have been given clear guidance on how to develop child friendly ways of assessing pupils' targets and their predicted grades. As a result, many teachers are becoming very skilled at enabling pupils to see how well they are doing. The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in its thoroughness. The best examples show that some teachers are clearly informing pupils of what they need to do in order to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. In Years 7 to 9, it is successfully matched to the full range of pupils' needs and, in Years 10 and 11, there is very good provision for work related learning and vocational education and training. For example, some pupils study at the local college of further education and all pupils have well planned work placements. The school is struggling to balance its good breadth of provision with statutory requirements. For example, the sheer range of courses means that pupils do not have the requisite amount of religious education. There are successful measures to develop business skills, including five days a year when the normal curriculum is suspended to make way for a range of stimulating enterprise-based activities. Systematic arrangements for personal, social and health education and citizenship ensure that pupils grow as responsible and mature citizens.

The curriculum is enriched with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including trips, cultural pursuits and sports. Of special benefit to pupils is the extended curriculum with links to schools in Europe and beyond. Technology College status has enabled many aspects of the curriculum to benefit from additional investment in innovative digital technology to support learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

All pupils are very well looked after and cared for. In particular, those pupils who find it difficult to go into the playground areas at break times are welcomed into the Learning Support Unit during lunchtimes. Child protection and safety procedures are firmly established and understood by all adults. Recently, targets for personal development and learning have been identified for all pupils and these are shared with pupils and parents during 'target setting days'.

Individual education plans for the many pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are clear and contain useful mini-targets which address most subject areas. Pupils' additional needs are catered for very well. The school works effectively with a number of outside agencies. For example, specialists in hearing impairment, behavioural difficulties and learning English as an additional language make important contributions to pupils' learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money. The main issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The new headteacher has a very positive influence throughout the school and is building a strong and able senior team. In a relatively short time, this team have improved processes for identifying and rectifying weaknesses, successfully communicated their vision to staff and involved a wide range of stakeholders, such as staff, pupils, parents, governors and outside agencies. Consequently, there is a very good capacity to improve further. Governors provide good critical support. They have a firm grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and deploy the budget well to realise agreed priorities. The school 'pulls together' well to achieve continuous improvement and morale is high. These qualities are transmitted well to pupils who value their education.

The school manages its specialist Technology College designation well. The strong commitment to digital technology has resulted in it becoming embedded in teaching and learning across all areas with some innovative uses, including effective individualised approaches to assessment and target setting. This has had a positive effect on pupils' achievement across subjects.

The school has an accurate view of its own performance. Managers concentrate well on improving the things that will make the most difference. For example, weaknesses in teaching are quickly identified and decisively tackled. There has been a successful whole school focus on the progress of boys, pupils with statements of special educational need and more able pupils. Middle managers salute recent improvements, which they are eager to support; although many are good, they are not all equally effective. Well targeted support from inside and outside the school is leading to greater consistency of practice. Senior staff strongly promote equality of opportunity amongst both pupils and staff. Staff recruitment procedures and learning resources are well matched to pupils' specific learning needs.

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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>	2	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	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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

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

<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	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

<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 being so courteous and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. We very much enjoyed talking to you, watching how you worked with your teachers and speaking to them about your progress at school.

Your teachers give you good support and guidance and you say that you appreciate this help. We were impressed by the responsible ways in which you are helping the staff to make decisions about things that affect your life at school, for example, through the school council and the pupils' forum on the anti-bullying policy. Your parents are supportive of the school too.

Your teachers work hard and do their best to help you learn by providing interesting activities and expecting you to work hard and to maintain good standards of behaviour. The curriculum that you have is good and provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils of different abilities and talents. You make good progress as you move through the school.

Your headteacher and other staff run the school well and are looking closely at how they can improve it even more. The inspectors believe your school is doing very well indeed in many areas, but we have asked your headteacher, her senior team and the rest of your teachers to do the following things:

- continue to find ways for everyone to achieve better results in all subjects
- ensure that in all subjects your work is marked to a high standard
- make sure that your progress in all subjects is checked as carefully as in the best examples