



# Samuel Ward Upper School and Technology College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 124852  
**LEA** SUFFOLK LEA  
**Inspection number** 281825  
**Inspection dates** 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Stephen Grounds LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Chalkstone Way
<b>School category</b>	Maintained		CB9 0LD
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01440761511
<b>Number on roll</b>	774	<b>Fax number</b>	01440 761 899
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr.B Shepstone
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Howard Lay

<b>Age group</b> 13 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281825
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Samuel Ward Upper School and Technology College is a medium sized upper school in Haverhill and has expanded considerably in the last five years. It serves a mixed catchment area in which there is some significant deprivation. The vast majority of pupils are white. The college has had technology college status for about five years but has recently increased the specialisms associated with this status. It is also a training school working in liaison with the University of Cambridge. The college has a sixth-form which for the last few years has worked jointly with the other upper school in the town.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Samuel Ward Upper School and Technology College is an innovative school with many strengths. It is justly well regarded by its pupils and their parents. The college's self-evaluation shows that the senior management team have a good understanding of the college's strengths as well as areas for development. Pupils make good progress taking into account their starting points. However, the progress of students in the sixth form is less secure. Inclusion, so that pupils of all abilities enjoy success, is a strength of the college. There is an orderly and tranquil environment for learning and good relationships exist among pupils and between pupils and the staff. Pupils and students enjoy their time in the college. The college's curriculum is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. Good teaching and learning contribute to the development of pupils. The college is actively exploring new approaches to teaching and learning. The quality of care is good with some outstanding features. The college is well managed with a track record of steady and embedded improvement including what it has done since the last inspection. It works well with other organisations which affect the 13-16 age range. All in all it has a good capacity to improve.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Standards have declined in recent years and students achieve at standards well below the national average. Whilst the majority of students achieve at least in line with predictions a significant minority fails to achieve at expected levels. In part this is due to students being entered on to courses for which their starting points are inappropriate. The target-setting process and monitoring of progress are not as thorough as in the main school, and have been identified by the college as in need of improvement. The college has also identified joint teaching arrangements and shared accountability as a weakness and has re-negotiated the local arrangements for delivering courses. This is already having a positive effect on the number of pupils staying on and remaining in the sixth form. Teaching in the sixth form is satisfactory overall and sometimes good or even very good. Students make reasonable progress in lessons. Many of the innovative developments at Key Stage 4 are starting to influence the curriculum offered in the sixth form but are yet to impact significantly on examination results. The broad range of additional opportunities (delivered in conjunction with business and other partners in the community) has a positive impact on the personal development of students and helps to prepare them for a productive working life. The leadership of the sixth form is only satisfactory at present, although there are plans to strengthen the focus on academic expectations and performance whilst maintaining the high standard of care and support. The college has a good understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and what is needed to bring about further improvement.

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

- Provide opportunities across departments to share good practice in teaching and in moving towards personalised learning. - Disseminate the innovations of the main school in teaching and curriculum into the sixth form in order to raise standards. - Improve spiritual and cultural development by seeking opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and others' experiences.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The attainment of pupils starting at the college as measured at the end of their primary education is slightly lower than that found nationally. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below national averages. Nevertheless the standards achieved at Key Stage 3 are around national averages. Indeed the 2003 and 2004 science results were significantly above national averages. These fell back in 2005, as the college had anticipated in consequence of staffing difficulties. Provisional results for 2005 in English, however, indicate a substantial rise, whilst mathematics results have improved at the higher levels. At Key Stage 4 the standards have improved from just below to just above national averages since the last inspection. The provisional results for 2005 indicate a substantial rise in the number of pupils gaining five or more A\*-C grades. For the third year in succession all pupils passed at least one GCSE and 96% attained passes in five or more subjects. Sixth form standards declined to well below national averages in 2004, although the provisional results for 2005 show some improvement at both AS and A2 levels. The college does not achieve as many higher grades at A-level as found nationally although this again has improved in 2005. Pupils generally make good progress at Key Stage 3, with the exception of science in 2005. Progress in Key Stage 4 is also good, with a strong indication of added value. The progress of students in the sixth form is less secure. Learners with learning difficulties make good progress. The college sets and achieves challenging targets for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, based on predictions from a range of indicators. In the sixth form most students achieve or exceed their targets, although a minority fail to achieve their target grades. Specialist School targets have mainly been met or exceeded.

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

**Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being at the college are good. Pupils enjoy the college and appreciate the variety of opportunities they are given to learn and make progress. Attendance has been a cause of some concern to the college, but has improved considerably in the last year to a point where it is at least in line with that for with similar schools. Behaviour is good in and beyond the classroom and pupils display positive attitudes to learning, particularly in the many lessons where teaching is active and well matched to pupils' needs. The college does not fulfil the statutory

requirements regarding a daily act of collective worship and offers pupils limited opportunities for spiritual reflection in tutor time and assembly. Pupils' social, moral and cultural education is good. Pupils show a sensitive awareness of the needs and feelings of others and demonstrate this in many examples of charity work. The school council is becoming increasingly effective in promoting students' views and taking responsibility, as seen in recent changes in the school uniform. The college is making good efforts to promote healthy lifestyles. The healthy eating options are popular. Pupils know how to stay safe and formal safety procedures in the college are very thorough and well understood. Pupils take opportunities to be involved in college and community events. Opportunities in personal, social, and health education and work-related learning give pupils skills that they will be able to use in their future working lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The college's judgement that the quality of teaching and learning is good in the main school was confirmed by the inspection. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and have good relationships with pupils. The pupils come ready to learn and this creates a positive learning environment in which the pupils engage in the activities. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. The college has managed recent staff turbulence well to minimise the long-term effect on pupils' learning. Courses provided are suitable for pupils with a range of particular needs and work is provided in lessons for the needs of all pupils. In the best lessons pupils are actively involved in their own learning. This was seen in pupils evaluating the work of peers in physical education and in the conversations carried out by pupils in a music composition lesson. Assessing the understanding of the pupils and tracking their progress are strong. The use of this knowledge is good as was seen in a science lesson when compensatory work was undertaken to fill a gap in the pupils' knowledge of chromatography. The college has identified the need to improve the 'thinking skills' of the pupils and to develop their personalised learning skills. As an instance of this, the art department is already showing strength in this aspect, providing examples of good practice that can be shared. Teaching in the sixth form is at least satisfactory and sometimes good or even very good. Learning is satisfactory: the college has identified this as an area of development by closer monitoring of pupil progress. It is confident that the recent improvements seen in Years 9 to 11 will work through into the sixth form.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of the curriculum is good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good. ICT resources are good but the outcomes in terms of pupils' achievement are not as high as expected. The issues over the continuity of staffing in this area have yet to be resolved. The curriculum provides opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties, to progress and perform well. The arrangement for pupils to take National Curriculum tests and GCSE examinations early acts as a motivation for gifted pupils. There is a strong vocational and work-related programme. The college is aware of its need to address the continuity of its vocational provision in the main school into the sixth form. Learners are well served through the curriculum because work is matched to individual need through effective target setting (individual learning plans). Statutory requirements are met except that there is no general religious studies course in the sixth form. Health and safety education is good and the opportunities for enrichment are very good. The curriculum is responsive to local needs through the college's technology status. There is ample opportunity for pupils to contribute to the community and take responsibility.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care provided by the college is good, with some outstanding features. All requirements for child protection are in place and suitable risk assessments are undertaken. A healthy lifestyle is promoted through the encouragement of physical activities and the range of food and snacks provided within the college. The college has firm arrangements to deal with discipline problems and the provision for supporting vulnerable pupils is outstanding. The in-school provision and the links with other individuals and agencies have resulted in very low exclusion rates and contribute to the good behaviour seen around the college. The pupils report very few incidents of bullying. Older pupils act as mentors for other pupils. The use of targets within all subject areas is a key to pupils understanding how they can improve the standard of their work. Pupils undertake a regular self-review process of specific and general targets and the college integrates the various Individual Education Plans, and the Pastoral Support Plans with the Individual Learning Plans that all pupils have. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is provided through the use of teaching assistants in the classroom. These assistants undergo thorough training and constantly monitor the progress of individuals. They are effective as seen in a geography lesson when intervention ensured a pupil was able to stay focused and access the work being undertaken by the other pupils. A suitable careers programme gives advice on progression routes and offers practical experience in a range of related areas such as writing curriculum vitae, applying for a post and undergoing a job interview. Pupils are well known in the college and good communication within the college overcomes problems caused by changing form tutors. Parents are very positive about all aspects of the college. Their view is that their children are well cared for, guided and supported.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

### Grade for sixth form: 3

The college evaluated its leadership and management as good overall but satisfactory in the sixth form. The evidence from this inspection supported this view and identified significant strengths in leadership. The headteacher leads the college well. He has a clear vision for the college and is innovative. The college has an effective senior management team which shares, and is able to implement, the vision of the college. As a result there have been improvements in the quality of teaching and the college has become calm, orderly and efficient. The self-evaluation conducted by the college is good. The college is proactive in a number of methodological and staffing aspects to improve teaching and learning. The inclusion of all learners is a central feature. For example, a pupil from a special school is incorporated on a weekly basis in mainstream teaching. The college has been successful in meeting the criteria necessary to attract a number of additional funding sources. Managers have a shrewd awareness of how well the college is performing. Good use is made of external consultants in order to monitor the performance of departments and the college frequently uses questionnaire analyses to seek views from stakeholders. There is a good track record in making improvements. The nature of the type of sixth form partnership adopted locally has made some of the issues of performance of the sixth form more intractable. Nevertheless inspectors are confident that recent decisions on structure and management in the sixth form will increase and match the pace of improvement seen in the main part of the college whilst at the same time maintaining good relationships with other providers. Governors are loyal in their support of the college: they are proud of what it achieves and its concern for pupils. Good use is made of individual professional expertise including that within the governing body. The college's financial management is secure: budgets are tightly controlled and value for money is good. The college is very well regarded by parents and pupils. After a period of staff turbulence the college has teachers who are well-qualified and experienced. The college has appointed advanced skills teachers as part of its successfully policy of promoting innovations and good practise in teaching. The accommodation of the college is good and there have been recent additions to the attractive site This good college has the potential to become an outstanding one. In the main school it has a successful recent history of improvement. The further changes that are required are within its capability.



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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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
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>	2	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	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### 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	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
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	2	
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>	2	3
<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	2

<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	3
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	2	
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	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**

It was very good to meet you during the inspection and listen to the many positive things you had to say about the college. Thank you for your participation in the work of the inspection team. We judged that the college is an innovative school with many strengths. It is justly well regarded by you, its pupils, and your parents. The senior staff of the school know what it does well, and why, and know what they need to do to make it even better in the future. Those of you who are pupils in the main school make good progress taking into account your starting points. In the sixth form progress is less secure, but the staff will try hard to improve that. An important strength is that as far as we could see, the vast majority of you whatever your academic potential, make progress and enjoy success. We were impressed by the orderly and tranquil environment for learning. Clearly you enjoy your time in the college. Good teaching and learning contribute to your development. We are impressed by the way the staff are trying out some ways of helping you to learn better. Outside lessons, the college is also good at caring for you. We consider that the college is well managed with a track record of steady improvement. As such it has a good capacity to improve further. We have said to the college that in order to improve it needs to: - ensure good practice in teaching is shared across the staff and subjects; - extend the good developments in the teaching and the curriculum from Years 9-11 into Years 12 and 13; - provide you with the opportunity to stop and reflect on your own and others' life experiences, including those of people in other countries and cultures. The inspection team wish you well with your studies and your futures.