



The Coleshill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125746
LEA Warwickshire
Inspection number 281992
Inspection dates 18 January 2006 to 19 January 2006
Reporting inspector Clive Kempton HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Coventry Road
School category	Community		Coleshill
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		West Midlands B46 3EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01675 462435
Number on roll	1026	Fax number	01675 465232
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Dr Colin Hayfield
Date of previous inspection	20 November 2002	Headteacher	Mrs Kate Kearney

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	18 January 2006 - 19 January 2006	281992

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The Coleshill School is an oversubscribed school serving the villages and towns in North-West Warwickshire, with a significant minority of pupils choosing to come from North Solihull, outside the catchment area. The school became a Maths and Computing Specialist School in September 2004. A few pupils each year from a neighbouring special school join some lessons. There is a thriving sixth form. The pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The Coleshill School Maths and Computing College is an effective, inclusive school with some good features. Pupils make satisfactory progress and most reach national standards by the end of Key Stage 4. Students make better progress in the sixth form. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there is a wide variation in its quality and marking and assessment procedures are not yet consistent. The school is effectively led and has a core group of committed senior and middle managers who are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, they have identified the need to disseminate the good teaching and assessment practice and to improve the achievement and attitudes of some pupils. Since the last inspection in 1999, the school has demonstrated that it can raise standards and implement change but staff changes and the low aspirations of some pupils have slowed the pace of improvement. With the new middle managers in place, inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that the school does have a good capacity to improve, even though strategic development planning is not sharply focused enough and lacks sufficient detail. Pupils' personal development is good. All are well cared for, guided and supported. Maths and Computing College status has proved to be a catalyst for school improvement over the last two years and this has been instrumental in the school achieving its highest results yet in 2005. Inspectors agree with the judgements that the school makes of its standards and provision. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are good with some outstanding features, such as the contribution the students make to the life of the school. Students reach satisfactory standards by the end of Year 13. Achievement is good because the curriculum is effectively matched to students' needs and interests. Teachers strike the right balance, challenging individuals to improve through interesting lessons. Students are encouraged to work independently in lessons and benefit from private study areas and provision for use of computers, developed since the school was awarded specialist college status. They enjoy school life immensely. Students develop very well socially, whether helping younger pupils through the Anti-Bullying Committee (ABC) or performing well in national competitions to promote financial understanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of all teaching to match the best in the school
- make marking and assessment procedures consistently good
- ensure school improvement planning is sharply focused, with clear, measurable targets that can be achieved quickly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils enter the school with average standards in Year 7. They make satisfactory progress to reach expected standards at both Key Stage 3 and 4. Standards and achievement have fluctuated over the last three years, as the school has suffered from rapid staff turnover resulting in some teaching inconsistency. Current standards have risen following a recent improvement in teaching, especially in English and mathematics. Standards now match those found in similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 4, girls' standards are better than boys'. Many average-attaining boys achieve no better than expected because teaching does not challenge or stimulate them to do more than the minimum required. In some subjects, the school's own targets have been missed owing to staffing difficulties. A recent development has been the introduction of systems to monitor the progress of all pupils and help them to set targets for improvement. New initiatives, such as a mentoring programme, have raised pupils' expectations, leading to better examination results. In mathematics, achievement is better than expected, because specialist college status has enhanced staffing, focused teaching and sharpened assessment. It has also made it possible to provide more advice to pupils and extra classes for those seeking to improve. Elsewhere, the achievement of lower-attaining girls is good because they benefit from well-directed individual help and guidance. Generally, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve as well as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. Sixth form students are particularly happy there. Attendance levels are above average. Bullying is rare and dealt with quickly by staff and the particularly effective student members of the ABC. Behaviour is good, especially when large groups meet in assembly and in the dining hall. However, there is occasional low-level disruption of lessons when teachers don't exert firm enough control. Pupils feel safe in school and are encouraged to take care moving around the corridors. Healthy living is encouraged through sporting activities and an improved choice of food in the cafeteria, including free salad and vegetables with all meals. Safe practices are developed effectively through learning about the dangers of drugs and alcohol in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have many opportunities to mature socially and morally through thinking about and discussing topics such as racism and through different age groups working together. However, the school does not yet do enough to develop a strong understanding of multicultural life, nor is there a strong sense of spirituality in lessons other than religious education. There are regular assemblies but no daily act of collective worship that includes a period of reflection. Pupils are fully involved in the school community, for example, through mentoring younger members and through the Pupil Consultation Group. They come to understand the needs of the wider community through various charity events. Sixth form students make an outstanding contribution to the school, being involved in and making a difference to

many aspects of school life. Pupils are given adequate opportunities to understand the world of work through developing skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and learning how to work with others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a significant amount of good teaching, but a few lessons are unsatisfactory. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular but not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the weaknesses in teaching are successfully eliminated. In the best lessons the planning is thorough and takes good account of pupils' differing needs. The lessons include a variety of activities, often using ICT, which interest and motivate pupils, involving them actively in learning. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they will be doing. They expect, and insist on, good behaviour, thus creating a purposeful working atmosphere. Where teaching is weaker it often fails to provide enough variety in the learning activities. Frequently teachers talk too much, failing to provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their own ideas. In some lessons, teachers' expectations are too low. In others, basic classroom rules are not enforced rigorously enough so that poor behaviour disrupts learning. The quality of marking is variable. There is some which shows pupils clearly how to improve further. On too much work, however, teachers' comments are not specific enough. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support from their teachers and assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The provision in Years 7 to 9 is suitably broad and balanced. There is a satisfactory range of traditional academic GCSE, AS and A level courses, but only a small number of vocational courses. Although the school has tried to extend the range of these courses, take-up has not always been high and the school has been unable to recruit suitable teaching staff. Not enough thought has been given to investigating ways of providing greater flexibility in the curriculum. Appropriately for its specialist status, the school makes good use of ICT to support and enrich teaching and learning in many, though not all, subjects. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop work-related skills. The curriculum is enriched with an adequate range of extra-curricular musical and sporting activities as well as local and overseas residential trips that provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their personal and academic development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. Pupils and parents report that the school cares well for pupils. At least twice a year, form tutors and heads of year review and amend targets with the pupils. These arrangements provide an effective basis for assessing progress. Relationships are good, and pupils know they can seek help and support when they need it. The use of older pupils to support younger ones is an effective strategy for providing help. The school has good links with external agencies. This ensures a good range of support is available to all pupils. The work of external mentors has successfully raised achievement in Years 9 and 11. Child protection arrangements are good. Staff have had recent training to update their understanding of the procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, with some good features. It is good in the sixth form. The headteacher is a committed and dedicated leader and holds her management team to account. She has been successful in appointing key new middle managers. Collectively, managers at all levels have a good capacity to further improve standards. There has been a strong commitment by the senior leadership team to the continuing professional development of the new middle managers, including an externally accredited course, 'Leading from the Middle'. Managers at all levels feel valued and supported by the headteacher. A good feature of the leadership and management team is their accurate evaluation of the school's standards and provision. Everyone, including parents, pupils and staff, feels involved and valued in the decision-making process and regular questionnaires and Pupil Consultation meetings produce action points that are effectively implemented. For example, the pupils were closely involved in making changes to the school uniform. Involvement in new initiatives, such as the 'We Learn Project' and the successful application to become a Maths and Computing Specialist School, have had a positive influence on the ethos and culture of the school in the last two years. Whilst there are early signs of improvement in standards and provision in the specialist subjects, the pace of improvement over time is generally too slow and lacks urgency. Strategic development planning and the monitoring of teaching are weaker areas of management and lack a sufficiently sharp focus on raising standards or detail of how improvements will be measured. Governance is good. Governors are enthusiastic and committed to the school and have worked well with the senior leadership team in devising, challenging and confirming the judgements of the school's self-evaluation. They have ensured that the school meets all statutory requirements apart from the daily act of collective worship. The curriculum committee regularly meets the management team, analyses the school's results and receives timely reports from individual subject departments. Professional bodies, such as the local police and agencies providing mentoring,

behavioural or counselling support, are very positive about the links they have with the school and the mutual support they receive. Partner schools linked to the specialist status report enhanced provision and targeted support in mathematics for gifted and talented individuals that is raising standards. Regular technical support for ICT is also highly valued. Parents appreciate the annual school calendar and regular newsletters that keep them well informed of key dates and events. The recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff remains an issue for the school. Newly qualified teachers and teachers appointed under the Graduate Teacher Programme are very positive about the support they receive and the friendliness and openness of the teaching staff. Resources are deployed effectively and accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	2
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

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	3
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	1

The quality of provision

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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	2
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	2
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

Dear Pupils and Students Thank you for welcoming us so warmly into your school during the inspection on 18 and 19 January 2006 and for the time you spent talking to us and showing us your work. We thought you would want to know what we liked most about your school and what we all thought would make it even better.

- we respected your polite and confident manner when talking to visitors
- you were willing to share your honest views of the school
- you looked very smart in your new school uniforms
- you all obviously enjoy coming to school
- the sixth form students act as very good role models around the school
- most of you behave well in lessons and around the school, listen well to your teachers and are keen to do well; a few of you disturb the learning of others with distracting behaviour in lessons that prevents the teachers from doing their job as well as they could
- your teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons for you
- Mrs Kearney and her management team are committed to helping you to improve your standards
- the staff look after you well and help you when you have a problem
- the specialist college status has helped you achieve higher standards in mathematics.

In order to make the school even better, we have asked Mrs Kearney and the senior staff to:

- help all your teachers to get even better
- make sure that the comments and marks your teachers write in your books help you all to understand what you need to do to improve your work
- devise a plan with more detailed steps to help you achieve even higher standards.

Clive Kempton Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools