



Cox Green School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110067
LEA Windsor and Maidenhead LEA
Inspection number 284034
Inspection dates 1 February 2006 to 2 February 2006
Reporting inspector David Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Highfield Lane
School category	Community		Maidenhead
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		SL6 3AX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01628 629415
Number on roll	912	Fax number	01628 637383
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Powell
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2003	Headteacher	Mr Ian Hylan

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 18	1 February 2006 - 2 February 2006	284034

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Cox Green School, a specialist Performing Arts and Media College, is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive with 912 pupils. The school is located on the western side of Maidenhead in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and is similar in size to most secondary schools. There are 146 pupils in the sixth form. Most pupils come from the local area and the surrounding villages, the socio-economic factors of which compare favourably to the national picture. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The pupils' attainment on entry is just above average. Pupils are predominately of white British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average. Pupil mobility is low. The school is part of the DfES funded Maidenhead Federation, it achieved the Arts Mark Silver Award in 2003, the Investors in People Award in 2004 and most recently the Sports Mark Award in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

The school was visited by HMI in June 2005 as concerns had been expressed about the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. At that time behaviour was found to be satisfactory but weaknesses were identified in the quality of provision. During this inspection the pupils' personal development was satisfactory and the school's care, guidance and support were good. Self-evaluation is satisfactory and the headteacher has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Standards of achievement and attainment are broadly average. The quality of teaching has improved significantly but remains inadequate overall. The school is currently unable to provide religious education in Key Stage 4 and the use of assessment to inform teaching and learning is inconsistent. The quality of marking is inconsistent. Attendance remains below average and some pupils are consistently late for school. 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 less well than in all the circumstances it can reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and learning because the proportion of lessons judged to be inadequate was unacceptable.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Teaching and learning are good and the pupils make good progress. The pupil retention rates are good and standards are above the national average. Pupils in the sixth form are registered in mixed age tutor groups where they support younger pupils, help with paired reading and lead aspects of the school's charitable collections. The sixth form often lead events in the local community which are related to the school's specialism. Leadership and management are effective and staff deploy resources carefully to improve the quality of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

* continue to improve the proportion of good teaching and eliminate remaining poor practice. * improve the quality of learning by ensuring lessons are planned with reference to the school's assessment data in order to challenge and engage all pupils* improve attendance and punctuality* meet statutory requirements for religious education

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The pupils' attainment on entry has risen in the last three years and is just above average. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 in 2004 and 2005 was above the national average. The

performance of girls was significantly stronger than the boys. In English and mathematics almost all of the higher achieving pupils did well but nearly one in four pupils failed to make appropriate progress in science. The percentage of students who gain five or more higher GCSE grades is below the national average although the proportion who gain five or more pass grades is above average. Nearly all pupils attained at least one GCSE level pass. The performance of average and less able boys was significantly lower than the national average; however, these figures were masked by the improved performance from girls of all abilities. The school's results in art, home economics, combined science and English were stronger than the national figures; however, the results in some subjects were disappointing. In the sixth form, standards are just above average. The pupils generally made good progress with strong performances in the advanced vocational certificate in leisure and recreation and advanced level music. However, results in some subjects were below expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Many pupils enjoy coming to school and take part enthusiastically in the wide range of activities, many of which are derived from the school's performing arts specialism. Attendance has improved but remains below the average for secondary schools. A number of pupils arrive late on a daily basis. The school is working hard with pupils and parents to ensure they understand the consequences of such behaviour. Overall, attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory with the number of pupils excluded from lessons reduced from the same time last year. Pupils move around the site sensibly and enjoy the different age mix within tutor groups where positive social development is evident. Some unsatisfactory behaviour was noted in lessons where teaching failed to interest and engage the pupils' attention. The pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures is underdeveloped as a result of the curriculum weaknesses in religious education. Assemblies provide a good focus on moral issues but opportunities for reflection and spirituality are missed. The pupils are aware of the importance of healthy eating and have worked with catering staff to adjust the school menus. The pupils' charitable fund raising talents are provide an insight into their future economic well-being. The proportion of pupils involved in voluntary physical activity is above average. Sixth form students play an active part in the school particularly during tutor times where they act as mentors for younger pupils, and, for example, organise charity events to support projects in Africa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning have improved since the last monitoring inspection in June 2005 but remain inadequate overall. Teaching in the sixth form is predominantly good. In the most successful lessons, the management of pupils is secure with supportive relationships between adults and pupils. Good subject knowledge and carefully planned learning intentions underpin such lessons. Questioning makes good use of visual materials, including well-considered classroom displays. Language skills are developed effectively through skilled use of the pupils' responses and the development of technical vocabulary. As a result, pupils are empowered to analyse resources and explore their understanding orally. In these lessons progress was good. Where lessons were less effective, planning often focused on content and paid insufficient attention to the pupils' learning needs. All staff are provided with useful information on the pupils' attainment and preferred learning styles, although some teachers failed to make appropriate use of this information. One in six lessons was inadequate. The quality of marking is variable, and too often cursory in nature. Learning support assistants are not always effectively directed by teachers. Those lessons that were inadequate were characterised by a lack of pace and challenge. The resultant disengagement and disruption was not effectively managed. Some lessons lacked structure, others the provision of appropriate stimulation or visual material and some teachers' written work lacked clarity.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3, including those who have learning difficulties and disabilities. There is good provision for those who have particular literacy needs. Older pupils benefit from an increasingly wide range of vocational opportunities, including some work-related courses. The curriculum provision to support the pupils' future economic well being is good. Specialist status in the performing arts has introduced positive changes to the option system while maintaining previously successful courses such as music for gifted pupils. However, there has been little impact so far in other curricular areas. Designation as a specialist college has reinforced the already rich out-of-hours experiences provided through the arts. Despite these strong features, the school does not provide for religious education in Years 10 and 11 or in the sixth form. In this respect, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Overall, the curricular provision for post-16 students is good. They benefit from a broad range of courses both in school and through the federation. Recently introduced opportunities such as media studies are popular. A performing arts course at Level 3

has been introduced to allow progression from Year 11. The school has plans to provide further vocational courses where provision within the federation is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has an effective house system to support the academic and personal development of pupils. Non-teaching pastoral managers and heads of house work as an effective team. Careful identification of individual learning needs enables those with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress. Good links have been developed with the local authority's support services. The pupils are consistently positive about the care and support available and comment favourably on the recently introduced mixed age tutorial system, where those in the sixth form play an important role in mentoring younger pupils. Child protection procedures are robust and are supported effectively by outside agencies. Regular assessment tasks indicate how well pupils' achieve in relation to their targets. The use of assessment information is most consistent in the sixth form, where students are clear about what they must do to improve. Careers advice and support is good and ensures that all pupils are well informed about the options available to them when they leave school. Students in Year 11 and in the sixth form are given good information about the options open to them when they leave school and the recently introduced internet-based guidance system is both popular and effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Effective self-evaluation takes account of the views of all major stakeholders; the headteacher has a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, there are weaknesses in the leadership team at both senior management and middle management level. Roles and responsibilities are not sufficiently focussed to help the school move beyond average standards and eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching. Satisfactory assessment information now informs provision but this is used inconsistently by the staff. Following the inspection of June 2005 the school introduced an effective system of lesson observation and evaluation. This has improved the quality of teaching and provides a programme of support for other staff. However, the school's assessment of the quality of teaching has been more generous over time than noted by inspectors. Inadequate teaching remains in a number of subject areas where lessons fail to match the pupils' learning needs. Weaknesses exist in the leadership of subject areas where the monitoring and evaluation roles of heads of department are developed inconsistently. The leadership and management of pastoral matters are good. Heads of house and pastoral managers are effective and have produced a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. The provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and is well-managed. Teachers are provided with good opportunities for professional development. The school's specialist provision is at a very early stage in its development but is satisfactory overall. Significant improvements have been

made in the provision of interactive classroom technology and electronic learning. The governance of the school is sound overall although there are weaknesses in the provision of statutory religious education in the upper school. The governing body is well informed and good decisions have been made to enhance the teaching resources and facilities available. The provision of specialist equipment is adequate and accommodation is being revitalised. Financial resources are used effectively. As the quality of teaching in Years 7 to 11 is inadequate the school gives unsatisfactory value for money. However, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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?	4	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
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	2
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	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	4	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
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	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	3	
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	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

Thank you for contributing to the inspection. It was good to meet you during my recent visit. I was generally impressed by your behaviour, how positive you are about your school and your attitude to learning. I was particularly impressed by the way you enjoy lessons that challenge your creative, physical and intellectual talents. The skills we saw demonstrated in art and design, music and a number of sixth form courses were impressive, as was the sound of the band echoing around the school at lunchtime.

As I have just said, I believe there are many good things about your school to be celebrated but there are also ways in which it must improve. I have asked the headteacher and the governors to focus their efforts on ensuring that teaching helps you make good progress in all lessons. It is particularly important that you attend school regularly. The school should improve the use of assessment to help you learn: senior managers will explain to the school council your role in this development.

As pupils you can make a significant contribution to these developments by developing the debate in the school council. I look forward to hearing about your future success.