



Evesham High School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116932
Local Authority Worcestershire
Inspection number 285379
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Matharu HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Four Pools Road
School category	Community		Evesham
Age range of pupils	13–18		WR11 1DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01386 442060
Number on roll (school)	743	Fax number	01386 41734
Number on roll (6th form)	198		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	F Smith
		Headteacher	D Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
13–18	22–23 November 2006	285379

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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

Evesham High School is an average sized secondary school for students aged 13 to 18. It serves the southern half of the town and villages to the south and east of Evesham. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is lower than the national average. The school gained specialist sports college status in September 2003.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Evesham High School is an effective and inclusive school where students flourish in a caring and supportive atmosphere. From entering the school with broadly average attainment, students achieve good standards at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. They make good progress overall. This is as a result of predominantly good teaching which engages students and promotes their enjoyment of learning, together with a sharp focus on timely interventions when students are off-track. Achievement is improving, particularly at Key Stage 4, as a result of the school's robust improvement strategies. However, standards and achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 4, although improved, are still below those expected. Standards and achievement in the sixth form are average but rising. The school's aim to help pupils 'enjoy and achieve' is clearly evident in the school's ethos, being successfully translated into many of its actions, both in lessons and through the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities provided. Specialist sports status has contributed significantly to the realisation of the school's aims for increased student participation and enjoyment. Students are positive about their experiences and feel that they are well taught and cared for. Relationships with their teachers are strong. Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding because of the effective support provided, together with excellent academic monitoring and guidance to achieve individual targets. There are many useful opportunities for students to assume responsibility and contribute to school life which are significantly enriching their personal development.

The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students well. Provision for Key Stage 4 and beyond is good especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) but is more limited in terms of vocational options.

The headteacher is an effective leader who articulates a clear vision for the school, which is shared by the staff. He is well supported by a strong senior team and they have a mutual understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a shared view of the strategies required to improve further. However strategies to improve teaching have not yet been fully evaluated in terms of their impact on learning. This is a reflective and improving school and there is strong capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students speak highly of the support and teaching they receive in the sixth form and this is reflected in the high numbers staying on. Sixth formers are strongly represented on the student council and have a good influence on the life of all students in the school and in the local community. Many took part in the recent school production of 'Fame'. The standards reached by students are slightly above the national average and they achieve well in lessons. Sixth form managers have introduced effective measures to raise attainment and this is apparent in the good results of interim A-level modules in 2006.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the provision for 14– 19 year olds to include a wider range of vocational courses.
- Raise achievement further, for example in mathematics, through raising students' aspirations.
- Adjust the focus of classroom monitoring to assess the impact of teaching initiatives on learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Standards are consistently above average at the end of Key Stage 3 in English, mathematics and science. Standards at Key Stage 4 are also above average in most subjects. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are outstanding and reflect the high importance placed on the subject since the last inspection. Standards in the sixth form are slightly above the national average and students make good progress in lessons.

Students enter school with broadly average ability and therefore make good progress to achieve good results at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Achievement at Key Stage 4 has improved recently because managers have ensured that underperformance is identified quickly and effective intervention measures are taken. The school is now introducing these successful measures into the sixth form to boost improvements in achievement. Achievement of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is also good.

Underperformance in mathematics at Key Stage 4 is being effectively addressed and results are now nearly in line with expectations and rising. Managers remain focused on improving standards in mathematics further by targeting those capable of achieving A* and A grades as well as C/D borderline students. The school has exceeded its targets for the rate of progress made by pupils and has performed as well as the top third of schools across the country. It is now setting more challenging targets for achievement for the future. The school has a strong capacity to build on the improvement in achievement of sixth form students gained in the past three years as indicated by the strong achievement of Year 12 students in 2006 in some subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development is good and students clearly enjoy school. Parents are positive about the many ways that the school supports students' development and achievement. Students feel that their views are carefully listened to and that they have successfully contributed to, for example, the anti-bullying policy and the improvement in the environment of their common rooms. The school council is effective and influential.

Students feel safe in the school and recognise the commitment of staff to their well-being. Attendance is improving and is at the national average. Behaviour is good overall and in most classes there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. In a few classes there is some low-level disruption when students' attention and interest are not fully sustained.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students have well developed communication skills and cooperate effectively with each other. There is a good range of visits to extend students' cultural experience. The ethos of the school is to celebrate and reward individual and team achievements such as sporting ability, music and drama participation as well as encouraging good attendance and academic success.

The school promotes a healthy lifestyle, particularly through the high take up of sporting activities both within and outside the school day. Students' contribution to the wider community is good through their involvement with charities and the support of reading in other partnership schools. Effective ICT skills and well established work experience effectively contribute to students' economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching is consistently good and meets the full range of learners' needs. Teachers teach within their own areas of expertise. They have improved their skills in the use and application of ICT in their teaching. Many teachers successfully use interactive whiteboards to enhance their teaching and stimulate students. A wide range of teaching approaches was observed, making good use of resources. The implementation of consistent strategies to improve teaching, focusing on enjoyment and achievement, is improving the quality of teaching across the school.

Students enjoy their work and make good progress, showing good behaviour in lessons, with only a small minority of students not learning as effectively as possible. Teachers stretch those students identified as gifted and talented by providing additional, more challenging activities. Together with teaching assistants they provide effective support for those with learning difficulties. Teaching assistants work well with teachers and are involved in the planning of support activities. Extensive use of other resources, such as outside visits and fieldwork, adds to students' learning experiences. Teachers set challenging targets that are shared with students, and monitor progress rigorously, to ensure that they make good progress. The improved use of data to monitor progress is a strength of the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good, with the range of courses meeting the needs of all students, enabling both the least and most able to achieve well. The curriculum meets statutory requirements with satisfactory provision for religious education, an improvement from the last inspection. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy and citizenship, and excellent ICT arrangements where this is taught as a discrete subject and as a skill used in other subjects, again an improvement since the last inspection.

A limited number of vocational courses are offered through links with local colleges and every student completes work-related activities including work experience and enterprise days. Specialist sports college status has ensured that the strong focus on physical education emphasises the benefits of an active lifestyle to all students as well as enhancing the options of study open to them.

There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which are well attended on a regular basis. Students say that the good range of post-16 courses encourages them to stay at school. Many of these students progress to higher education courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for students are outstanding. This is because the school pays close attention to students' academic and pastoral needs. Data are used very effectively to track the academic progress of students and clear action is taken to support students where necessary. Strong pastoral support from tutors and heads of year reinforce this. The Time Out Centre is an outstanding example of the emphasis on individual needs and students speak very highly of the support and care that they receive. The behaviour management course, shared with two other schools, is another example of this excellent support. Those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent guidance from teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress. Statutory requirements for health, safety and child protection are met.

Transition arrangements with feeder middle schools are carefully and thoroughly organised and Year 9 students confirm that they settled into the school very easily. Careers guidance is very good with all Year 11 and sixth form students given a personal interview and targeted advice about future academic and work options. There are strong and effective links with a wide range of other agencies such as health and social services. Sixth form students are trained to mentor younger students and this provision supplements the very impressive range of support and guidance available within the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. They are becoming increasingly effective at all levels in the school. The senior team, ably led by the headteacher, has an accurate understanding of the school's priorities and a systematic approach to implementing school improvement strategies. The team demonstrates vigour in tackling issues of underperformance and this is having an impact on results, for example in mathematics where standards are now improving.

There have been significant improvements since the last inspection, namely in the provision and application of ICT, which is now a considerable strength of the school, and in the consistent use of monitoring and evaluation procedures across the school. These are systematic and ongoing and provide the school with good evidence about its effectiveness, leading to accurate diagnosis of issues and areas for action. The use of data to monitor and track students' progress and pinpoint where interventions are needed is developing well and having a positive impact on improving student performance. Staff training in this area has resulted in a sharper, whole-school focus on using data effectively to plan teaching and learning. There have been rigorous interventions to improve teaching, although the impact of these when monitoring learning through lesson observations has yet to be established.

Middle leadership is developing soundly; there is a shared understanding of the school's priorities and a clear focus on improving achievement at all levels. The coaching and mentoring of middle leaders are proving effective in developing leadership skills and demonstrates good use of existing staff expertise. Governors are well informed; they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a focus on raising standards and achievement as their main priority.

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?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school last week. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with many of you about your school. You told us that it has many good features and we agree with you. The school is well led and managed by Mr Kelly and his staff. You are well taught and cared for and you are achieving good progress overall. In particular, the standards you are achieving in information and communication technology (ICT) are excellent. Standards in GCSE results are improving and your teachers are working hard to make sure you achieve the results you are capable of. Relationships with your teachers are good and the atmosphere in school is very supportive. Many of you enjoy the wide range of activities available and appreciate that your opinions are listened to and acted upon.

In most of your lessons and around school your behaviour is good; occasionally it slips a little and you become distracted, which could be avoided. Overall, however, the majority of you are responding well to the challenges in lessons and we saw many of you enjoying your learning and working really hard to achieve good results.

Your school constantly looks for ways to improve; this is a key factor in its success. We have asked your staff to consider:

- Developing further the range of vocational courses available from Key Stage 4 onwards, which will appeal to some of you.
- Raising achievement further, particularly in mathematics, by encouraging you to aspire to the highest grades.
- Focusing in lessons on the impact of the teaching activities on your learning and which ones are being most successful in helping you to improve.

You can help by setting your sights high in terms of grades; many of you are capable of achieving these and with your teachers' support can achieve even more highly.

We feel sure your school will continue to improve and we wish you every success in the future.