



# Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 103494  
**Local Authority** Birmingham  
**Inspection number** 286678  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Davinder Dosanjh HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Secondary          | <b>School address</b>   | Woodbrooke Road    |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Community          |                         | Bournville         |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 11–18              |                         | Birmingham B30 1UL |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 0121 4644040       |
| <b>Number on roll (school)</b>            | 618                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 0121 4642856       |
| <b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>          | 55                 | <b>Chair</b>            | Alastair Rae       |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Lesley Brooman     |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 30 September 2002  |                         |                    |

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|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection dates</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 11–18            | 24–25 January 2007      | 286678                   |

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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

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College is a popular school in the south west of Birmingham. It draws pupils from a much wider area than its immediate locality, including pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and speech and communication difficulties, into its Curriculum Support Centre. There are more boys than girls in the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high and well above the national average. A high proportion of pupils are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some 76% of the pupils are White British with other pupils being from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The school is part of the Oaks Sixth Form College, a collaborative post-16 provision since September 2006. The school became a specialist technology college in September 2001.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that has a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere and is a caring community. It values each individual and good care, guidance and support promote an inclusive ethos. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by the Curriculum Support Centre. Relationships and behaviour are good. Every Child Matters managers are used well and there are good intervention strategies to deal with attendance and behaviour. Attendance has improved and is good. Pupils feel safe, enjoy school and feel very well supported. They comment positively about the small size of the school being a real benefit to them. They know where to go to for help. Staff know the pupils well. Parents are largely supportive of the school. They comment that the school listens to their views and the transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils into the school are excellent, in particular the summer school.

The school council is very active and an important channel for the pupils' voice. Pupils feel they have been involved in making many changes. For example, having more healthy options at lunchtime and developing the anti-bullying campaign. Pupils are positive about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer, which they enjoy taking part in.

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE has improved significantly since 2003. Standards in national tests in Year 9, while improving in 2006, are still below the national average. The school's strategies to improve achievement have been very successful at Key Stage 4. These include subject focus days, targeting and mentoring pupils at specific levels and Wednesday afternoon study support for Year 11.

Teaching is good overall. There is a strong, whole-school focus on developing a consistent approach to teaching and learning with regular staff training. Lessons are well planned and organised. The quality of the marking and assessment of pupils' work is variable with some exceptionally good practice in geography and design and technology. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and meets the diverse needs of pupils well. The school's specialist technology status is producing many benefits with improved resources and improved standards at Key Stage 4.

Leadership and management are good. A clear direction is set by the headteacher to further improve achievements. She provides good leadership and is very well supported by senior managers and middle managers. There is a systematic approach to implementing school improvement strategies. Self-evaluation is thorough at whole-school and subject level. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing most of the areas identified for improvement and it has a good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Standards for AS-level courses in 2006 were well below the national average and there are significant variations in attainment between different subjects. Most students make satisfactory progress from low starting points. A more rigorous approach to enrolment has resulted in ensuring students are now on appropriate courses. Increasing collaboration with local schools and colleges is improving value for money and providing a broader curriculum. However, some very small classes still remain. The Oaks Sixth Form College arrangements are new and it is too early to judge the impact of these. Teaching is satisfactory. Its quality varies and is not sufficiently analysed to ensure students make better progress. Students appreciate and value the individual support they receive from teachers and form tutors. They support pupils lower down the school for whom English is an additional language and organise charity events. Sixth form students are not clear about their relationship with the rest of the school. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The work of the sixth form is not monitored and evaluated rigorously enough to bring about sustained improvement.

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

- Improve achievement and raise standards of attainment at Key Stage 3.
- Share good assessment and marking practice across all subject areas to ensure more consistency.
- Improve the leadership and management of the sixth form to raise standards and improve the quality of provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

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

Pupils' standards when they join the school in Year 7 are below the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards which are still below the average in Year 9. However, they build well on their first three years and make exceptional progress by the end of Year 11. Standards have risen at the end of Year 11, where the percentage of pupils gaining five or more higher A\* to C grades has increased markedly since 2003 to be in line with the national average, although in 2006 there was a small drop in the number of pupils obtaining A\* to C grades. The number of pupils obtaining English and mathematics remains below the national average. English is improving but mathematics results declined in 2006. The introduction of courses that better match the needs of pupils, for example vocational courses in science, has helped to raise standards. The combination of individual support and more effective use of assessment information to monitor pupils' progress to improve standards has been successful in ensuring pupils are making good progress.

All groups of pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups, make at least good progress during their time at the school. Statutory targets have been exceeded for GCSE and Key Stage 3. Not all specialist technology college targets have been met.

Standards in the sixth form are well below average for AS courses which most pupils study but around the national average for A levels and vocational courses. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress from low starting points. There are significant variations in attainment between different subjects.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The pupils enjoy school and want to learn. This is evident in their positive attitudes in lessons and their considerate behaviour towards others. Overall attendance levels are good. Pupils have an informed awareness of developing healthier lifestyles. For example, through their school council in consultation with the canteen supervisors, they introduced healthier choices on the menus. They respond well to good provision in sports and other extra-curricular activities. They are aware of the dangers of substance abuse, and aware of the need to adopt safe practices to protect themselves from harm.

The positive ethos of the school ensures that pupils' moral and social development is good through assemblies, lessons, and the good role modelling of the staff. Pupils have a sound sense of right and wrong. The active school council is run by the pupils themselves, who know their voice is heard. They engage in a variety of charity fund raising events, such as the shoebox appeal and the impressive Christmas hamper citizenship project. Their spiritual development is satisfactory but not as well planned for, although there are examples in art, English, history and music. Good cultural development is promoted well through music, art, drama, and the exploration of different faiths and cultures in religious education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The focus that has been given to improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection has resulted in teaching and learning being good overall. Learning throughout the school is now organised so that pupils know what to expect in all of their lessons. Teaching is planned effectively to meet the full range of learners' needs and lessons begin with clearly stated learning objectives.

Teachers manage their classes well. Teaching is structured appropriately to ensure that a good range of teaching strategies are used, making good use of resources. Teachers are enthusiastic and display good subject knowledge. The high expectations of teachers lead to pupils displaying positive attitudes to their learning and feeling well motivated. Learning assistants are well used to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Good progress is made by most pupils in their learning, and this is monitored by the school on a regular basis. Relationships between teachers and pupils are sound and contribute to the positive climate for learning seen in the school. The quality of the marking and assessment of pupils' work are variable but there is very good practice in geography and design and technology. Some teachers, though not all, use interactive whiteboards well to enhance the learning experience of pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The activities provided for pupils are good and meet the statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils in the school well and provides a broad experience for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they all make good progress. The time allocated to different subjects is well balanced. English and mathematics are given appropriate time and the amount of time for physical education provides pupils with a healthy lifestyle in school. Provision for technology and information and communication technology (ICT) has greatly benefited from the school's specialist status as a technology college. There have been difficulties with geography at Key Stage 4 that have reduced the range of options that pupils aspire to. The local environment is well considered in the enterprise and strong work related curriculum, where the school aims to prepare pupils for a technological future. There are good enrichment opportunities which pupils enjoy and which are well taken up at lunchtimes, although less so in the enrichment afternoon session. Increasing collaboration with local schools and colleges is improving the range of options for post-16 students and providing a broader curriculum. The school offers a limited number of courses in its own sixth form.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is good. All the requirements for child protection are in place and the staff are made aware of child safeguarding procedures through regular training and the quality of planning. The care shown for the pupils' welfare is good. This is evident in the closely monitored and ongoing academic assessment of all pupils, and the promotion of their health and safety, especially for the more vulnerable. The effectiveness of the support given is

closely monitored by senior staff, learning mentors, and the Every Child Matters managers. There is a good understanding of the challenges faced by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff training on meeting their needs is constantly updated. Particularly effective is the training provided for every teacher to understand the background cultures and meet the learning needs of pupils who have English as an additional language. Pupils in Year 11 benefit from weekly study support, and well developed programmes guide and support them in their choice of options and careers. The pupils value this guidance highly.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are good. The senior team, ably led by the headteacher, has an accurate understanding of the school's priorities and a shared commitment to addressing them. There is a systematic approach to implementing school improvement strategies and a clear focus on the quality of teaching and learning. This has led to sustained improvements at Key Stage 4 with priorities now focusing on Key Stage 3 and core subjects.

There have been good improvements since the last inspection. A new appointment has started to address the underperformance of geography although the absence of modern foreign language teaching at Key Stage 4 presents the school with a new challenge. The school day has been changed to better meet the needs of pupils and teaching and learning are now good. The school has worked collaboratively with other local schools to create a recently opened sixth form provision for students.

Self-evaluation is a strength of the school and is central to the school's monitoring of progress. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Performance management is good and underperformance is dealt with. Regular staff training focuses exclusively on developing consistency across the school in teaching and learning strategies. The professional development of staff is well supported through a growing culture of coaching at all levels. The use of data at whole-school level is good with termly reports keeping parents informed about progress and achievement.

Governors have a good knowledge of the school and use their skills well and provide good support and challenge to the headteacher. The high quality of leadership contributes to the school's capacity to improve further.



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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> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

### 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   | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 2   | 3   |
| 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   | 3 | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 2 |   |
| The behaviour of learners   | 2 |   |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |   |
| 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 | 3 |

<sup>1</sup> 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

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| <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   | 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 being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school recently. You were mature and sensible and gave us an enthusiastic account of school life. Your school has a very friendly and welcoming atmosphere and you and your teachers and other staff obviously get on well together. You are right to be proud of your school.

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College is a good school. You make good progress because you are taught well by the staff and the school provides you with many opportunities for study support and mentoring. Results at GCSE have improved significantly since 2003. The school is collecting good data on your progress and this really helps your teachers to plan better for your needs. The headteacher and the other senior staff regularly check the work of the school and try to make things even better for you. Your own school council is a great help in improving the school even further and we were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and around the school. The quality of care, guidance and support that you receive is good. The school is a caring community.

We have asked your teachers to help you learn even better, particularly lower down the school. We would like your teachers to make sure that all your work is assessed and well marked, and that this helps you to make better progress in all subjects. We have also asked your school to continue to improve the sixth form.

The headteacher, senior managers and governors make a good team. All staff at the school are highly committed to their work and know where they can make further improvements.

We encourage you to continue to support the school and to play your part in making it even better. We wish you all the very best for the future.