

# Tile Hill Wood School and Language College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103735
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	286738
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Kempton 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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Girls
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1141
6th form	153
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Wall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Shirlaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Nutbrook Avenue Coventry CV4 9PW
<b>Telephone number</b>	024 76426200
<b>Fax number</b>	024 76426246

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The school draws girls from all areas of the city. There is shared sixth form provision with the neighbouring boy's school. As a specialist language college, the school has a strong national reputation for its modern foreign language provision and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. In 2006 the school was awarded a second specialism in vocational education. As a result, the curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been further enhanced to provide more opportunities for applied learning for every student. Girls' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Tile Hill Wood School and Language College is a good school with some outstanding features, where the specialist language college status is having a significant impact on many aspects of the school's provision. Standards in languages are high. Girls have many opportunities to learn a range of languages including Japanese. Year 7 girls are taught one subject from a choice of geography, personal, social and health education (PSHE), science and citizenship through the medium of French; as a result, standards are also rising in these subject areas. This immersion programme has attracted national recognition. The school has met all of its challenging specialist subject targets. Standards and achievement across the curriculum throughout the main school are good and satisfactory in the joint sixth form with the local boys school.

Girls obviously enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their positive behaviour and attitudes to their work in lessons. The cultural visits and exchanges resulting from the language college status are extensive and, together with the wide range of opportunities girls have to raise money for charity, make the personal development of the girls outstanding. All are pastorally very well cared for, and guided and supported well in their academic work. Staff go out of their way to ensure that all girls are supported, even when they face difficulties outside school. One parent commented, 'This is a caring school. If the girls need help, they get it.' Additional pastoral staff are well deployed to provide consistency and stability to girls as they move through the school and this is another factor in the school's success.

This all happens because the school is well led and managed by the headteacher who is ably supported by an impressive team of senior managers. The dip in examination results at GCSE in 2006 galvanised the senior management team into an even stronger resolve to monitor and track performance and ensure that 2007 predictions are very secure and back on track with the above average trend in GCSE performance.

The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school and sixth form although there remains some variation, notably where girls are not sufficiently challenged or where some lesson activities are not stimulating enough. The school has an accurate overview of the quality of teaching through regular observations but there is no whole-school system to pull these monitoring outcomes together. The curriculum in the main school is outstanding, and good in the sixth form. Outstanding features apart from the French immersion programme in Year 7 include the wide range of Key Stage 4 and 5 courses available through collaboration with the South West Federation of Coventry schools and the recent vocational specialism awarded as a second specialism. This enables the school to provide an individualised curriculum at Key Stage 4.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. There is good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

The shared sixth form is good and improving. Whilst standards and achievement are currently average, there are clear signs that these are improving. This is because the head of sixth form has achieved good progress in improving communications between the two schools and establishing shared expectations of work and progress. The range of courses is broad and expanding and students are well supported and guided in their work. Academic progress is being carefully monitored and appropriate interventions made to improve this, when required.

Sixth formers are confident and positive about their experiences and their personal development is outstanding because of the good care, guidance and support provided. The sixth form is well led and managed.

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

- Ensure that all lesson activities are relevant, interesting and engaging for all pupils and that understanding is regularly checked with targeted teacher questioning.
- Place a stronger emphasis on differentiation within all lessons so that all pupils are appropriately challenged to achieve even higher standards.
- Devise a more rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement and standards are good. Standards have been above average in recent years at both Key Stages 3 and 4. In 2006, performance in English at Key Stage 3 declined slightly, with fewer pupils than expected gaining the higher levels. This resulted in a dip in performance overall in the core subjects, although results in mathematics and science remained steady. Standards at Key Stage 4 dipped in 2006, with considerable variation between subjects, arising from a variety of factors. These were anticipated by the school and the contributory issues explored in detail by the inspection team. This has prompted an intensive recovery strategy which is now bringing about improved progress. A variety of strategies have been implemented, including a focus on improving teaching and learning, and rigorous tracking of pupils' progress with strong academic support and guidance. As a result, progress has improved and the school is now on track towards meeting the challenging targets set for 2007.

Progress relative to prior attainment is good overall at both Key Stages 3 and 4, despite the underperformance at GCSE in 2006. Good progress was observed in lessons during the inspection and the school's current monitoring confirms that all groups of learners are making good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make similarly good progress.

Standards in the sixth form are broadly average, and improving steadily. The school's recent monitoring indicates that improvements in teaching, careful tracking of students and interventions when necessary are now resulting in good progress. This monitoring indicates that students are on track to achieve improved standards.

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

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Personal development and well-being of the girls are outstanding. They adopt very positive attitudes to learning in lessons and behave well, although some of the behaviour around school is a little livelier.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. Assembly and tutor time is well used by staff to explore a range of planned issues such as 'hope' and 'humility'. These sessions are often led by the girls themselves and include an opportunity to personally reflect on the issues. The international dimension of the language college status has provided the stimulus for numerous murals around the school that enhance the pleasant surroundings.

Girls are provided with a wide range of opportunities for international visits and exchanges to Japan, Holland, France, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. They are also encouraged to raise money for charity. Often ideas come from the girls themselves and result in fete-style activities such as table-top sales, making quilts for Sri Lanka, inventing games and other guessing activities. During the inspection, for example, girls had the opportunity to become Sumo Wrestlers to raise money for Comic Relief. Another time in the year, the 'Jeans for Genes' appeal raised over one thousand pounds. This strong commitment to developing the whole person and giving something back to society is also evident in the Christmas hampers collected for the church to distribute to the local community, and in the Junior Sports Leader award where older students deliver sports coaching in local primary schools. Such activities ensure that girls contribute to the local community and also develop enterprise skills that prepare them for the world of work.

Staff also generously give of their time and get involved. For example, some are persuaded to form singing groups, or enter school talent competitions such as the X Factor, which again adds to the positive relationships in the school and to the personal development of the girls.

Numerous sporting clubs are organised for the girls to help them adopt active lifestyles. For example, football, basketball, netball, swimming, use of the fitness suite and dance are all available daily for different year groups, although participation does decrease as the girls get older. Girls know what food they should and should not eat to ensure they develop a healthy lifestyle, and healthy eating has been encouraged by the school through the improvement to lunchtime meals and snacks and the removal of vending machines around the school. The provision of drinking water is well used by the girls. Despite these positive moves, some girls still choose not to fully embrace a healthy lifestyle.

The student voice is developing and pupils are regularly involved in taking responsibility and contributing their views. For example, the school council held discussions with caterers about food options and pricing structures, suggested the water coolers and asked for more benches outside. They report that they feel safe in school and that the rare incidents of name calling are very quickly dealt with.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The school has a clear and accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning. Three quarters of teaching is judged by the school to be good or better and the inspection confirms that most teaching is good.

In the more successful lessons, good relationships and lively, engaging teaching produce lessons where pupils achieve well and enjoy their learning. Planning is good and lessons are well organised. Pupils' behaviour in these lessons is good. Marking is generally effective and provides pupils with clear indications of how to further improve. The best teaching is well paced, and characterised by the use of relevant and interesting learning tasks which are appropriate for the abilities of the group, and there is regular checking of pupils' understanding to assess learning. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, activities are not sufficiently differentiated and do not fully engage all pupils. Targeted and extended questioning is not used fully to challenge pupils sufficiently or enable them to apply their learning.

The school has a focus on improving teaching and learning as the key to raising achievement. Monitoring of lessons informs their judgements, although the procedures for this are not yet consistently implemented across the school.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is outstanding and meets the needs of learners exceptionally well. Specialist school status is enhancing languages provision and providing a rich and varied languages curriculum. The choice of four languages available from Years 7 to 13 is enthusiastically received by learners and the international dimension to the curriculum is a key strength of the school's work.

The school's second specialism as a vocational school has prompted significant curriculum development. The flexibility and personalisation of the curriculum to meet the needs of learners at Key Stage 4 is an outstanding feature of the provision. Strong liaison with parents and pupils helps to match pupils to appropriate courses. This approach is successfully engaging learners who might otherwise be alienated from school.

The school's approach to curriculum innovation is creative and imaginative. For example, the curriculum enrichment days include a wide variety of opportunities which successfully develop pupils' skills and understanding of the world of work. The immersion project where pupils are taught a variety of subjects through French is raising achievement and receiving national attention.

A comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities is available for pupils and these are enthusiastically received and enjoyed by large numbers of them.

The sixth form curriculum is good, in partnership with the neighbouring boys' school, and provides a wide range of courses. The provision is developing as the vocational dimension at Key Stage 4 increases.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and a key feature of the school's success. Excellent individual care centred upon knowing pupils well, building positive relationships and supporting pupils carefully underpins this principle. The newly implemented pastoral system is very effective in providing strong support for pupils of all abilities and aptitudes. Learning managers have a clear focus on improving learning and achievement. Consequently, academic monitoring and guidance are now good and have the potential to raise achievement even further. Systems to track pupils' progress are comprehensive and pinpoint where underachievement exists. As a result, the school provides excellent guidance and support to improve learning. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust.

The Learning Support Unit is an excellent example of the outstanding, sensitive support matched to individual needs which includes and engages pupils who are experiencing a range of difficulties with their learning. The school's caring approach is appreciated by parents. One parent commented, 'We feel that she is nurtured by caring and supportive staff.'

The school has been successful in engaging reluctant learners through its individualised approach. Another parent commented, 'They have turned my daughter around through excellent support.'

Rewards are appreciated by pupils, and parents like to receive the postcards home celebrating success. This system is effective in encouraging girls to achieve and meet personal targets. Pupils appreciate the good relationships they have with staff and feel they are well supported. One pupil commented, 'They care about how we do and want us to succeed', which sums up the school's approach.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management across the school are good. The headteacher leads with purpose and determination and has provided strong, empowering leadership that has enabled other managers to flourish. The senior leadership group is equally conscientious and committed to raising standards.

The strategic vision of the school is to become a 'confident, self-evaluating and self-improving school where every opportunity is grasped to enhance the learning of all'. The school has certainly started down this route with its focus on self-evaluation at all levels. Middle managers are becoming more confident in self-evaluation processes and are held to account for the standards their curriculum areas achieve. Some are planned to receive further self-evaluation training this year. Managers at all levels have been involved in the calendared meetings to discuss whole-school self-evaluation. The headteacher is aware that this process has led to a document that is over-long, wordy and insufficiently evaluative. Despite the current shortcomings of the document, the school is very aware of the school's strengths and areas that require further improvement. For example, whilst the monitoring of teaching is regular and judgements accurate, there is no whole-school system to pull these monitoring outcomes together. School development planning is good. Objectives are clearly measurable and staff made accountable for action.

The success of the language specialism has led to an increase in the number of language assistants to six in a range of languages. Two French trainees are also working in the school to learn how to teach the immersion programme in France using English as the medium. Good partnerships have been established with the local authority, local schools and university training providers. The school is used by all these agencies to provide in-service training opportunities and to disseminate good practice, especially in the language specialist subjects. A number of parents reported how well the school had worked in partnership with them too, when individual difficulties had arisen with their daughters.

Governance is good. Governors take an active part in the school and increasingly hold the school to account for the standards it achieves.



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## Annex A

## 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	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

<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>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
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	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for your warm welcome when HMI Matharu and I visited your school in March. We enjoyed our brief visit and the opportunity we had to talk to you, look at your work and watch you learn. We thought you would like to know what we thought about your school, the outcomes of the inspection and what the school could do to get even better.

- Your parents think you go to a good school and we agree.
- You were all well behaved in lessons but a little boisterous around the school.
- You showed courtesy and consideration for visitors and each other.
- The opportunities you have to learn different languages is impressive, especially the immersion programme in Year 7.
- Your teachers work hard for you and spend time marking your work and telling you individually how you could improve your work.
- You obviously enjoy taking on responsibilities in the school like the Youth Support Group, raising money for charities and organising clubs.
- Those of you who need extra help get good support from teachers and other adults. This helps you know that you are improving your work.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that girls in Year 10 and Year 11 have a wide range of courses to choose from that meets individual needs and interests.
- You all looked smart in your school uniform.

In order to make the school even better we have asked your headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that all the activities you do in lessons are relevant, interesting and engaging and that your teachers regularly check that you have understood the work
- make sure that all of you are appropriately challenged to achieve even higher standards
- visit lessons to check that you are all learning as much as you can.