



The Coseley School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103857
Local Authority Dudley
Inspection number 286790
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Anne Taylor HMI

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Comprehensive | School address | Henne Drive |
| School category | Community | | Coseley |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 | | Bilston WV14 9JW |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01384 816565 |
| Number on roll (school) | 930 | Fax number | 01384 816566 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Susan Ridney |
| | | Headteacher | Amanda Elwiss |
| Date of previous school inspection | 12 February 2001 | | |

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| Age group | Inspection dates | Inspection number |
| 11–16 | 22–23 November 2006 | 286790 |

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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

The school serves a mixed catchment area including some wards with very high social deprivation in the Coseley area of Dudley. It is medium sized, and since 2002 has had specialist status in sport. The school has extended school status and serves the community through a range of activities and facilities. On entry to the school, pupils' prior attainment is low. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The number of pupils with a statement of special education needs is low, although the number identified by the school as having learning difficulties is high. There is a higher than average proportion of looked after children. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is low as is the number whose first language is not English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and has improved since the last inspection as a result of strong leadership from the recently appointed headteacher. In little more than a year since her appointment she has formed a strong leadership team, built capacity at middle manager level, improved pupils' behaviour, raised the focus of teaching and learning and improved standards and achievement dramatically by using data to inform target setting. This decisive action has halted a steady decline in achievement and standards. Leadership and management are good, there is a clear structure with strong accountability and there is good capacity to improve.

Pupils' overall progress is satisfactory; they make good progress at GCSE and in English and science in Year 9 but there is underachievement in mathematics in Year 9. Standards improved significantly in 2006 and in English and science in Year 9 they are now above expected for similar schools, although they remain low in mathematics due to staffing issues. The school's specialist status in sport has contributed to improvement in both science and English results in 2006 as a result of a short intensive programme linking physical education (PE) to additional tuition in core subjects. At GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades is the best ever at 42%. This improvement in 2006 is the result of targeted support and an improved curriculum more suited to the needs of individual pupils. The school has set itself very challenging targets to raise pupils' achievement and standards further. The targets are realistic and based on good knowledge of pupils and their prior attainment.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. They enjoy school, are well behaved and hard working in lessons, and are particularly enthusiastic about the extra-curricular activities and community work they undertake. Attendance has improved as a result of the school's increased focus on this.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with much that is good. The school has correctly identified the vital role of teaching and learning in raising standards and much has been done to eradicate poor teaching. Some good practice is evident, although there is not enough consistency. Pupils' relationships with their peers, with teachers and other adults are good and ensure that pupils are motivated to learn. Many pupils are very well informed about the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve: however in too many lessons pupils are passive and there is insufficient emphasis on independent learning. Teachers have extremely detailed and accurate records of the previous attainment of their pupils and clear expectations of their future learning, but do not always make enough use of the data to provide opportunities for all pupils to work to their potential in lessons.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced in all years and provides good opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties, to achieve well. Courses in Years 10 and 11 are a strength of the school, where a very good range of vocational courses and courses for less academically able pupils form a particular feature of provision. There are numerous and varied opportunities for enrichment, many based on the school's specialist sports status.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The recently restructured pastoral system provides support for individual pupils based on data of prior and current attainment. Although still at a relatively early stage in its development, some impact on pupils' progress is evident. Tutorial time at the start of each day is not yet used purposefully enough to promote personal development and well-being.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics at Key Stage 3.
- Use data on pupils' progress more effectively to meet individual learning needs in lessons.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning.
- Make better use of tutorial time to promote personal development and well-being.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Although the proportion of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades is still below the national average it rose dramatically from 28% in 2005 to 42% in 2006. The proportion achieving five or more A* to C grades including in mathematics and English rose slightly but remains significantly below the national average. Very few pupils leave school without any qualifications. At the end of Year 9 results in English and science improved significantly in 2006 to above expected for similar schools. Year 9 results in mathematics remain at a low level.

Pupils' overall progress is at least satisfactory and they now make good progress overall at GCSE and in English and science at Key Stage 3 although there is underachievement in mathematics. This is an improving situation. At GCSE pupils made especially good progress in PE, art and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Years 10 and 11, where they benefit from a broad range of options suited to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils are more positive about school than they used to be. They have greater involvement in making decisions, and feel that the change in leadership has made the school better. Behaviour in lessons has improved and is now good, but when pupils move around the school some are overly boisterous and physical towards each other. The number of pupils who are temporarily excluded remains high.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They enjoy the extra-curricular activities and when asked to, they mostly work well together. Pupils'

involvement in the community is strong. For example, a good number work with younger pupils in their own school and in the local primary schools. Good relationships mean that pupils are confident to go to adults for help and this makes them feel safe in school. They know about healthy eating but not all choose to take the healthy options in the dining room.

Pupils gain appropriate insight into the world of work through a variety of work related experiences and the school's links with other institutions. The school's specialist sports status equips pupils well with some of the personal skills needed for the world of work; however for many, leaving school without both English and mathematics GCSE at grade C or above means they are disadvantaged in the job market.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with much that is good. Managers monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and there is relevant and informative continuing professional development and sharing of good practice between staff. Most learners make at least satisfactory progress as a result of lessons which are well planned and in which clear objectives and outcomes are set. However in too many lessons, levels of challenge fail to stretch pupils fully. Teachers have extremely detailed and accurate records of the previous attainment of their pupils and clear expectations of their future learning, but few teachers make enough use of the data at their disposal to set work at different levels for different ability groups.

Many pupils are very well informed about the levels at which they are working and what they need to do to improve. However in many lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to be active learners rather than passive listeners and there is insufficient emphasis on independent learning. In the best lessons brisk and energetic teaching keeps students interested and involved. In a few less successful lessons the pace is slow and pedestrian. Teaching assistants and other classroom helpers and resources are very well deployed to support learning. Marking is good in some subjects where students receive early and constructive feedback on how well they are doing, but this is not consistent across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced in all years and provides good opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties, to achieve well. Pupils' achievement and personal development are effectively promoted and the curriculum is responsive to local needs. There is good provision for literacy and ICT, although provision for numeracy is less well developed. Work on the improvement of reading is particularly strong.

Courses in Years 10 and 11 are a strength of the school, where a very good range of vocational courses and courses for less academically able pupils form a particular feature of provision. The school has begun work with a local consortium to further develop work in this area and to build further progression for learners. There are numerous and varied opportunities for enrichment. Extra-curricular and sporting activities have a high take-up and are popular with pupils in all year groups. Since the school became a specialist sports college, both pupils and the wider community have benefited from the shared use of the much improved sports facilities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with some good aspects. The very recently restructured pastoral system has put the emphasis on academic support for pupils, and pastoral staff use the wealth of information on pupils' progress to focus support. This is still at a relatively early stage but is beginning to impact on pupils' progress. Increasingly pupils are clear about their stage of learning and what they need to do to improve. Pastoral managers provide personal support for pupils but the role of the form tutor in this is less clear and tutorial time is not used sufficiently to promote pupils' personal development and well-being.

The school works well with other agencies and accesses funding to provide good learning support for vulnerable pupils, such as Travellers and those children who are in public care. Most of the pupils who have recently come from the primary schools have settled well and feel safe in school. Advice about examination routes and career options for pupils in Year 9 does not always ensure that they take a broad enough range of options to give them a wide choice of future careers.

The school undertakes appropriate checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher has acted very decisively to halt a steady decline. The immediate priorities of improving behaviour and focusing on using data to inform target setting have been achieved. Staffing has been restructured effectively to promote these aims. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership, displaying not only a clear vision but also a strong visible presence around the school. She has played a highly significant role in improving staff morale through a difficult period, and recruitment and retention of good staff have improved. The senior leadership team now have clear areas of responsibility and provide clear direction to staff and pupils in improving the school and helping it run smoothly.

Middle leadership is good. Heads of faculty have a good grasp of data and most are responding well to the greater emphasis on being accountable for achievement and

the quality of teaching in their subject areas. New middle management appointments have resulted in raised standards in previously underperforming sections of the school.

Governance is now good. Governors know the school well and worked well with the local authority two years ago to ensure that action was taken to reverse previously poor standards.

The school strives hard to make links with others. Links with further education colleges and local schools are a particular strength supporting the vocational areas of the curriculum. The school actively uses external expertise to help promote improvements in teaching and evaluate progress. The school also encourages parental involvement and has reorganised the process for reporting and parents' evenings. Parental feedback to inspectors was very positive.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 3 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| 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? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 | 3 |
| 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 |
| 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 very much for welcoming us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to the very positive views you have about the school, especially about your very friendly, helpful and supportive staff. We know that nearly all your parents and carers share these views.

We found that The Coseley School is a satisfactory school which has improved greatly since the new headteacher arrived. Examination results rose significantly in 2006 in English and science in year 9 and at GCSE. You also told us about the many improvements that have taken place recently.

This is what we found that the school does well:

- The school is very well led by the headteacher and we were impressed at the amount of daily contact she has with you.
- Your behaviour in lessons is now good and you feel safe in school.
- You feel you are being listened to and involved in making decisions about what happens in school.
- You are increasingly aware of what you need to do to improve your work.
- The activities you can join in outside of lessons are particularly good.
- The option choice available to you in Years 10 and 11 is especially good and varied.

These are things which could be improved:

- We think you should be doing better in mathematics in Year 9.
- We would like to see you take more responsibility for your own work.
- All lessons should involve you fully so you achieve even more.
- We have asked the school to look at the use made of tutorial time.

We wish you well for the future and hope you are successful in whatever you want to do.