



Wood Green High School College of Sport Maths & Computing

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104007
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286835
Inspection date 12 December 2006
Reporting inspector Susan Morris-king HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Wood Green Road
School category	Community		Wednesbury
Age range of pupils	11–18		WS10 9QU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5564131
Number on roll (school)	1253	Fax number	0121 5064609
Number on roll (6th form)	197		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Peter Hughes
		Headteacher	Pank Patel
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–18	12 December 2006	286835

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector

Description of the school

Wood Green High School College is a much larger than average secondary school specialising in Sport, Mathematics and Computing. Around one fifth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. A higher than average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils which the school identifies as having learning difficulties is higher than average. More pupils than average come from areas of economic disadvantage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Wood Green High School College of Sport, Mathematics and Computing provides pupils with an outstanding quality of education. Staff, pupils, parents and governors are understandably proud of the school. Its name alone conveys something of its high aspirations: not content with being a successful sports college, the school applied earlier this year for specialist college designation in a second area. This has allowed it to expand further the exceptional range of opportunities which it provides to pupils. It is this drive for continual improvement by an outstandingly effective leadership group and staff team which has enabled Wood Green to improve year by year.

From the time they begin at the school in Year 7, pupils are made to feel an important part of a vibrant and successful community. The 'Wood Green Way' is clearly communicated to pupils on a daily basis. This allows pupils to be very clear about what the school views as success and to strive to reach the standards set for them. A strong emphasis on both personal and collective responsibility, which extends to the staff and to the pupils, permeates the school. As a result, staff at all levels take firm leadership of their teaching and other roles, and pupils see themselves as responsible for their own learning as well as for making a positive contribution to the school community. The senior leadership team are highly focused and driven, and have an exceptionally strong shared understanding of what they want the school to achieve.

Teaching is outstanding. Pupils are continually encouraged to work together in groups and pairs, which helps them to develop their social skills and their ability to be part of a team. The school successfully promotes a studious approach to learning. Academic results and targets are prominently displayed around the school; frequent conversations take place with pupils about how well they are doing; and marking includes comments about how the work can be improved. The curriculum meets the pupils' needs very well and the school is constantly seeking to improve this. Coupled with a wide range of support and mentoring, which is carefully focused on pupils' individual needs, these factors enable pupils to thrive and consequently students' achievement is outstanding. By the end of Year 11, they reach well above average standards from below average starting points in Year 7. The percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A* to C has increased steadily since the last inspection and, in 2005, the school was among the top 1% of schools in the country for the value it adds to pupils' education. The school is rightly ambitious to raise attainment even further by helping pupils to make as much progress in Key Stage 3 and the sixth form as they do during Key Stage 4, and has started the process of analysing the areas where action can best be focused.

The emphasis which the school places on the pupils' personal development is a key factor in its success. Both the pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their learning are excellent. Pupils enjoy school enormously – the vast range of clubs and extra-curricular activities available to them is a significant factor in this. Attendance is above the national average and constantly improving, this is another example of the positive impact of the school's high expectations and rigorous target setting. Pupils take a great deal of responsibility within the school. This ranges from mentoring younger pupils and leading sports coaching to interviewing new staff. Because pupils

are listened to and highly involved in the school and its running, they are reflective about their school and very articulate about its strengths. Pupils feel that they are treated like young adults and greatly appreciate the quality of education which they receive. They are particularly proud of the superb range of awards which they have won, including a recent prestigious sports award from a national newspaper. A plethora of trophies and certificates won for sporting competitions and community contributions, as well as prizes won by teaching and support staff, are prominently displayed around the school.

The school has used its status as a sports college very well to enhance pupils' personal development, particularly in raising self-esteem. The far-sighted use of sport to create a culture of learning in which 'success breeds success' has been very effective. Pupils recognise how much wider the range of extra-curricular sport available to them has become, and take-up is high at 50% of all students. The strong focus on developing young people's leadership skills through the sports college has met with such success that the school, through its new specialism of mathematics and computing, has embarked on an ambitious and innovative programme of awards for young mathematics leaders (MYLA) and young e-leaders (Yel@). The school also trains eight dance leaders a year, all of whom have moved on into dance coaching or a related job. All the School Sports Partnership targets have been met. Some pupils have the opportunity to take GCSE examinations from Year 8 onwards in physical education and mathematics as well as English Literature. Those that have done so have been very successful.

The school's capacity to improve further is excellent.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Students in the sixth form are exceptionally articulate ambassadors for the school, showing a high degree of maturity, confidence and commitment. A pattern of some students leaving the school for post-16 education elsewhere means that the overall standards of the group that joins the sixth form are lower than might be expected for a school with such successful Year 11 results. The students who do join the sixth form are no less committed, however. Their attendance is excellent. Through good teaching they make good progress in their studies and achieve average results at the end of Year 13. Two notable features of the sixth form are its very high success rate for university entry and students' outstanding personal development. Students value highly the support for learning they receive from the staff. The general care and guidance students receive, for example through the thorough induction programme, and the high level of support for entry to higher education, are unusually good. Through the 'Aim Higher' programme, for example, the school is involved in large-scale visits to Birmingham and Aston Universities, and students access taster courses for medicine and veterinary science, all aimed at raising their aspirations. Students readily take on a wide range of interesting responsibilities, including supporting younger students with learning difficulties in some lessons, sports coaching in primary schools and with younger students at Wood Green, and fundraising for charity. The leadership and management of the sixth form is outstanding, with a clear vision to promote the

benefits of continuing education after school. This leads to an atmosphere in which students can mature, and the support structures in place to enable all those who wish to apply for university to do so confidently. There are some variations in students' achievement which the school is keen to eradicate. Self-evaluation has identified several areas for improvement, for example in the higher order literacy and mathematics skills needed at this level, and new courses have been put in place in response. Regular reviews help subject leaders make any necessary changes to courses to meet the needs of students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the wide range of monitoring information available to identify the best actions to take to raise attainment further, especially at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils' standards when they join Wood Green in Year 7 are below the national average. Pupils make good progress and reach average standards by the end of Year 9. They build well on their first three years and make exceptional progress in Year 10 and 11 to reach well above average standards in GCSE and equivalent courses at the end of Year 11. National test results from Year 9 and examination results from Year 11 have both shown a steady increase over the last few years. The number of pupils from Year 11 gaining five or more grades A* to C including English and mathematics has increased steadily, too, with over half reaching this level in 2006. Much of this success has been due to the school's strong focus on raising pupils' aspirations of what they can achieve, setting challenging targets, and then supporting pupils very well so that they reach or exceed them. The school has been exceptionally successful in promoting this high level of achievement with lower and middle ability pupils, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. While higher ability pupils have continued to do well, particularly in the successful early entry GCSE programme, fewer than expected achieve the highest grades available. The school has recognised this difference and has already begun channelling even greater efforts into securing the highest possible gains among pupils of all abilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development is outstanding, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a very significant role in the school and feel their voice is taken seriously. Year councils and the school council feel they have made a difference through the suggestions they put forward, for example about changes to school dress. Members of the school council particularly welcomed their involvement in the

appointment of the headteacher, and their involvement in the 'school change team' has been highly beneficial during the major building works being carried out during the school day. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community outside school, for example through sports and other leaders' awards, and charity work. As well as the sixth form students, who raise an impressive £2000 each year for Macmillan nurses, each year group now supports a charity. In school, pupils and sixth form students take a range of responsibilities which enable them to understand their part in creating a harmonious community. Through this they develop a strong sense of social and moral responsibility.

Healthy options for meals, after initial resistance, are felt by pupils to be worthwhile, and restricting chips to only one day has been accepted. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and generally make sensible choices. Their health and fitness is greatly enhanced by the broad physical education curriculum and their very strong take-up of extra-curricular sport. Pupils feel very secure in school and around the site. There is very little bullying and any that does occur is dealt with effectively and promptly by staff.

The strong and successful emphasis which the school places on academic success, including the development of good literacy and numeracy skills, prepares pupils very well for life post-school. This is enhanced by a well-organised work experience programme, and a strong focus on developing leadership skills to increase self-esteem and create confident and resilient young people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The excellent teaching comes from a culture in which teachers are continually encouraged to reflect on their practice and how to improve it further. This is aided by an 'Innovation Unit' in which teachers can learn from each other and try out and evaluate new teaching methods. Lessons begin very promptly and proceed at a demanding pace. Pupils are expected to take their learning seriously and they do: classrooms are settled, calm and focused and pupils respond very well to their teachers' high expectations. The school develops pupils' learning skills well from Year 7 onwards: pupils are continually challenged to think for themselves, so develop an enquiring approach to their learning. The school has identified that some pupils need more strategies to become independent learners and has begun work to achieve this, particularly as students make the transition from Year 11 to the sixth form. The needs of the higher attaining Key Stage 3 pupils have also been accurately identified as a priority for further development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum meets pupils' needs exceptionally well. At the end of Year 9, pupils are given a good range of options to choose from for Key Stage 4. All options are open to all pupils; an inclusive approach which gives them a sense of genuine choice. The school runs a range of courses which are carefully designed to help any pupils who are underachieving. These have recently included a project for Year 8 pupils, one for Year 9 and one for Year 10 gifted and talented pupils. The outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, in which a very high proportion of pupils participate, greatly enriches pupils' experiences. Over 100 activities and clubs are offered to pupils, ranging from dance shows, a brass band and a film club to trampolining, the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and kayaking. Pupils value the opportunities they are given, for example a recent visit to Spain with three of the school football teams. A wide range of study support sessions help pupils to ensure that they are up to date with coursework and revision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school gives pupils outstanding care, guidance and support. Year leaders, supported by well qualified assistants, have a thorough knowledge of pupils. The attendance, attainment and behaviour of any pupils who are vulnerable or otherwise causing concern are rigorously and regularly tracked and monitored, and suitable action is taken. A particular strength, which is much appreciated by pupils, is the variety and quality of support they receive if they need it, including academic coaching, mentoring, learning support, and specially designed courses. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is well organised. Learning support staff work within subject departments, which allows them to gain a good knowledge of the curriculum. The way in which Wood Green introduces new Year 7 pupils to the school, particularly those who are vulnerable, allows them to settle quickly, and staff are well trained to meet their individual needs. The assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress is excellent and ensures they are fully informed about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The senior leadership team is a cohesive, dedicated team who have driven the school to succeed over a number of years. They are very well supported by the middle leaders, who are held well to account, but importantly trusted to take leadership of their own teams. As a result, leaders at all

levels continually and effectively plan for improvement. The school makes the best use of some inadequate accommodation, and senior leaders have worked tirelessly to plan the new building and to try to improve other physical aspects. The school carefully nurtures the professional development of its entire staff. This has led to many gaining promotion within the school over a number of years, and taking on responsibilities as they become ready for them. Staff are highly supportive of each other and very loyal to the school, and parents' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive.

The school works with a wide range of partners to share its own success and to improve its practice. As a 'Leading Edge' partner it works with a neighbouring secondary school; many student teachers are trained at the school each year; and the school has recently set up a training consortium to provide courses with and to other schools both in the Midlands and nationally. A 'mentor school' has been run for the last three years as part of the school's work as a specialist college.

The governing body provides the school with excellent support, as well as challenge. The chair is exceptionally knowledgeable about the school and has provided a great deal of practical support as well as leadership of the governing body, over many years.

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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>	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?	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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 excellent contribution to our inspection this week. We appreciated how you talked to us in your lessons, around school, and in the different groups, and shared your opinions. You were extremely articulate, and are superb ambassadors for your school. These discussions helped us to understand what is distinctive about Wood Green – and there is plenty!

You told us very clearly that your school is a very good one indeed. We have judged your school to be outstanding. It is outstanding because the results which pupils gain by the end of Key Stage 4 show that Wood Green students make exceptionally good progress; you are very well taught; and behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. You have a superb range of clubs and enrichment activities available to you, and it was good to see that you make the most of these. Sport is a real strength of your school, and evidently something which you really value. You also appreciate the excellent range of support which you receive to help you to succeed. From the time you begin at the school in Year 7, you are made to feel an important part of a vibrant and successful community. The 'Wood Green Way' is clearly communicated to you on a daily basis. This means that you are very clear about what the school wants you to achieve, and you strive to reach the standards set for you. We found that there is a strong emphasis on both personal and collective responsibility in your school – so you see yourselves as responsible for your own learning as well as for making a positive contribution to the school community. We were impressed by the contributions you make to charity, the leadership roles you take, such as the sports leader award, and the awards that you win. The senior leadership team and the staff are extremely dedicated to making sure that you have the best education available.

Part of the reason your school is so impressive is that it is always trying to be even better. The leadership team have already said that they want pupils to make as good progress at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form as they do at Key Stage 4. We agree that this is the right priority. You can support by being fully aware of your individual targets and working in a really focused way to reach them.

Well done for helping to create such an excellent school. I wish you the very best for the future.