



Etone Community School, a Language and Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125731
Local Authority Warwickshire
Inspection number 293348
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Janet Thompson HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Leicester Road
School category	Community		Nuneaton
Age range of pupils	11–16		CV11 6AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	024 76382008
Number on roll (school)	771	Fax number	024 76352320
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Vale
		Headteacher	Peter Kingham
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2002		

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Etone is a popular school which draws students mainly from Nuneaton. The school has been a specialist technology college since 2002 and, as a high-performing specialist school, has recently gained a second strand for languages. Students' attainment when they start at the school is broadly average. There are fewer students entitled to free school meals than in most schools, however almost half of the students come from local areas of high deprivation. Approximately one in twelve students is from a minority ethnic group and the majority of these students do not have English as their first language. In March 2006 a loose federation was established with Hartshill, another local secondary school. Etone has an additional resource base for students with specific learning difficulties but, in line with developments in the local authority, this is being phased out over the next three years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Etone is an outstanding school that is extremely popular with students and parents. Exceptional teaching and high expectations permeate all aspects of the school's work. As a result, standards at both key stages have risen each year since the last inspection, with a significant rise in Key Stage 3 mathematics and GCSE results overall in 2006. This means that standards are well above the national average at Key Stage 4. The senior team excel in finding creative ways of improving standards and are persistent in their actions to improve the school. As a result, students' achievement is outstanding. For example, the school has condensed Key Stage 3 mathematics into a two-year course. This is extremely motivating for students in Year 8 and they achieved very good results in 2006. Highly personalised support and guidance also help students make outstanding progress. The high level of participation in lessons has helped students take on more responsibility for their own learning.

Students behave very well and take great pride in their school. They feel that they are treated fairly and have very positive relationships amongst themselves and with staff. Students appreciate the flexibility of the school to accommodate their individual needs and interests. They are regularly invited to make their views known and feel these are valued. The school council takes an active role in ensuring everyone feels involved, as well as holding staff to account when actions are not forthcoming. Through its specialist status Etone has forged very effective links with other local schools and colleges as well as local businesses. This has ensured access to a wide and interesting curriculum that effectively prepares students for the adult world. They develop strong spiritual and moral values and seize upon a wide range of opportunities to widen their cultural awareness. The outcome of this is a strong perception of themselves as valued members of the school and wider community who take on additional responsibility willingly. Take-up of additional opportunities open to students is very good. These activities help students to lead healthy lifestyles and enable them to follow additional interests as well as improve their academic and social progress.

Leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher and the governors are rigorous in holding themselves and staff to account for their performance and this rigour is accompanied by excellent support and guidance. Regular checks of the teaching in each subject take place and senior managers are keen to hone their procedures in order to identify how lessons can be even better. Highly effective evaluation has enabled them to build very successfully upon the school's strengths and improve in the areas identified for development at the last inspection. The leadership structure has changed as a result of the federation. The structure was carefully developed by governors and the headteacher to maximise the capacity for further improvement at Etone as well as its partner school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Modify procedures for the observation of lessons so that the information gained helps the school to move more lessons from good to outstanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards reached by students by the end of Key Stage 4 have been consistently above average since 2003. Another rise in 2006 has improved standards to well above average. The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE grades at A* to C, including English and mathematics, is high and 99% of students achieve five or more GCSE grades. At Key Stage 3, students also reach high standards. The school has successfully diminished the difference in achievement between boys and girls, although boys still achieve slightly less well than girls within the school. The progress made by students also improved in 2006, with the vast majority making more-than-expected progress. Similarly, the gains made by students from different groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, improved with all achieving expected results and with many exceeding them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students rise to the high expectations promoted by the school and become confident, articulate young people. The school enables them to flourish and gain self-confidence. This is evident from the many comments made by parents. There are many ways in which the students are involved in helping the school to improve, including opportunities to take on responsibility. The healthy schools focus group, for example, has successfully helped the school improve food choices as well as gaining resources that enable students to cycle to school. There are still some students that do not make healthy choices even though the school actively promotes suitable options. Students are happy with the community spirit at the school and, as one student commented, 'All the students help to make it a supportive and friendly community'. Attendance is good, although there are a few students who do not attend frequently enough. Students feel safe and most of them thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good. In lessons students are attentive and keen to be actively involved. Students' expectations of teachers are high but on rare occasions, when these are not fully met, behaviour can fall short of outstanding. Bullying, although a concern of a few parents, is rare and decisive action is taken in response to any reported incidents. Through inspiring teaching, students become self-motivated and ambitious and have a clear understanding of the skills and qualifications they need to achieve their own goals. Preparation for future life is exemplary and students are very well equipped with skills for further education, work and leisure. Their understanding of moral, social and cultural aspects is outstanding. Reflection on current issues and healthy debate is encouraged. Spiritual development is provided for well through assemblies and within schemes of work across the curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Wide-ranging and inspiring activities mean that teaching and students' learning are outstanding. Teachers are very knowledgeable in their subjects and exceptionally well organised. Learning objectives are shared effectively and teachers develop positive relationships with students using praise and rewards very effectively. Teachers know the students extremely well and accurately match work to their interests and needs. As a result, students are very well supported in their learning. During observations a range of different learning styles was used and there was an expectation that all students would play an active part in the lessons. Teachers are very enthusiastic and determined that students will learn and make outstanding progress. There is some exemplary practice of using peer assessment to help students understand how to judge their work and make improvements. The school has rightly identified that the consistent use of best practice in assessment requires improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of learners extremely well. There is a strong emphasis on academic, vocational and social learning. Specialist status has helped the school to enhance the curriculum considerably by working in partnership with other schools and colleges. The creative approach to condensing aspects of the Key Stage 3 curriculum has also been successful in motivating students and raising standards. Improvements in information and communication technology (ICT) have provided flexible ways in which students can gain access to the curriculum independently and this approach has been especially successful in motivating boys. Citizenship and personal, social and health education are given a high priority by the school. They are carefully mapped and effectively taught across the curriculum and as discrete subjects, with additional thematic days. Issues from the last inspection relating to improvements required in multicultural education have been addressed well. A wealth of additional courses, clubs and opportunities is available to students, who welcome the chance to develop their interests. This is one of the reasons why they say that they enjoy school so much.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The personalised learning strategies and systems for tracking students' progress, socially and academically, are exemplary. The school has a very well-developed system for pastoral support that is seen as essential for helping students to make progress. Its ethos is focused on helping students to improve in all aspects of their development. The system has many layers and is very flexible so that staff can offer the right support at the right time for individual students. Students in Key Stage 4 have benefited from the individual mentor system and this has helped them improve their rates of progress

and raise their results. The school mentor, who is a trained counsellor, is popular with students and helps them to address significant challenges in their lives. The additional resource bases for students with learning or social difficulties effectively promote inclusion but also provide the necessary specialist support that is sometimes required. Progress is carefully monitored and actions are effective in helping these students make good or excellent progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Exemplary leadership very effectively ensures high expectations are held by all staff at the school. This is communicated well to parents and in turn has increased students' expectations of their own achievement. Management is highly effective at all levels and staff are empowered to use their initiative.

Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation of the progress and standards reached in subjects, year groups and by groups of students has ensured that they excel beyond expectations. Evaluation also focuses on ensuring individual student progress is as good as it can be. A very high priority is given to continuously improving teaching in order to help accelerate learning, although the school recognises that the procedures for checking teaching could be sharper in identifying how the good lessons could be even better. Accountability and support are well balanced and this helps subject leaders develop their departments effectively. Whole-school development planning clearly identifies priorities from evaluation of outcomes for students. There is an excellent balance between whole-school issues and priorities particular to individual departments.

Resources are used efficiently and opportunities to increase the capacity of the school are grasped wholeheartedly. Accommodation continues to be a challenge for the school, with many temporary buildings being used as classrooms. The governors have an extremely accurate view of the school but are not complacent. The determination to continue improvements is exceptional and is effectively supported by their involvement and governance of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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
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
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 contributing to the inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to talk to so many of you and I welcomed your views collected from the questionnaires. Etone is an outstanding school and these are the main reasons why.

- There are shared high expectations for your achievement. You work hard and so do the staff and, as a result, you make excellent progress.
- You feel safe at the school, behaviour is good and you appreciate the supportive community.
- The school is interested in your views and will take action accordingly.
- The vast majority of you enjoy school because the teaching is interesting and the curriculum is flexible so that you are able to choose subjects that interest you.
- Specialist technology status has helped your school improve its curriculum and develop partnerships with other schools and colleges. It has also provided better facilities at your school which have helped you to achieve more.
- The help you are given by different members of staff is extremely good and they all want the best for you. Many of you spoke of the extra support provided and how it helps you fulfil your ambitions.

I have asked the school to continue to improve lessons so that more become outstanding in helping you to make the best possible progress you can.