

# The National School, a CofE Technology College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122897
<b>Local Authority</b>	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	295431
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Cragg HMI

This inspection of the college 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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
College	1069
6th form	73
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev L Church
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr C Pickering
<b>Date of previous college inspection</b>	8 February 2006
<b>College address</b>	Annesley Road Hucknall Nottinghamshire NG15 7DB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0115 9635667
<b>Fax number</b>	0115 9638955

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the college

This is a school of average size with a relatively small sixth form. It draws students from a wide area in line with its status as a Church of England school. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. Students are mainly from White British backgrounds and few come from minority ethnic heritage or speak English as an additional language. The proportions of students with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs are well below average. The school is designated by the local authority as an inclusive school for students with physical disability. It has had specialist Technology College status since 2002. At the time of its last inspection, in February 2006, it was given a Notice to Improve. Since January 2007 it has been under the leadership of an executive headteacher in partnership with Tuxford School, Newark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the college

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its students. Since the last inspection, leadership and management have improved and the school now has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, there is clear direction and vision for the school which is shared by staff and governors. There are effective systems to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The school sets increasingly challenging targets and tracks students' progress against these regularly. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Standards are above average overall and broadly average in the sixth form. Students make satisfactory progress in all key stages. Students' personal development is good and they enjoy school. They are prepared adequately for the next stage of their life and their education. They behave well in lessons and around the school, and their attendance is good. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy and safe and make a good contribution to the school and local community. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good, students cooperate willingly and enjoy their learning but too many lessons are satisfactory and, in some, a lack of pace and challenge leads to students losing concentration. Although there is much good practice, too few teachers use discussion and questioning well to develop students' understanding and evaluation of what they are learning. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has recently been reviewed and an increase in the range of practical subjects agreed for September 2007 to match the needs of students more closely. The school's specialist technology status has made a good impact on the range of activities available to students. The school is in discussion with its partner schools and college about the contribution to be made by the sixth form within local provision.

Around half of the parents who responded to the questionnaire had some concerns. Inspectors investigated the behaviour of students and found that most students felt safe in school but that some had weak attention and listening skills where teaching was less effective. Concerns about the school taking account of students' views were not supported by members of the school council and other students who felt that there were many examples recently where they had had impact. Inspectors found that there was a case for the school to ensure that parents were more fully informed about and involved in the work of the school.

The school's Christian ethos is strong and its care, guidance and support for students are good. Support for those with specific needs is increasingly focused on their learning and achievement. The newly formed leadership team have made a significant impact in a short period of time. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory and improved at all levels and effective steps have been undertaken to remedy the key areas for improvement from the last inspection. The school's evaluation and planning is now thorough and there is good capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Over recent years numbers have declined, although the number of applications for next year is higher. Standards are average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Their personal development is good. Students speak positively about provision. They contribute well to the school community, for example

by helping younger students with their reading, and achieve success in the Young Enterprise scheme. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some parents expressed concern about the quality of provision and the school is aware of the need to improve teaching in certain subjects to ensure that students make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory, through the partnership with another local school, and provides an academic curriculum with small teaching groups. Students appreciate and respond well to being treated as adults and feel that their teachers know them well. Teachers provide good guidance and support to help students with their studies and personal development. Leadership and management are satisfactory with a focus on providing pastoral support.

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

- Improve teaching and learning through the consistent application of best practice to ensure that all students make good progress, especially in the sixth form.
- Ensure that all teachers use discussion and questioning techniques effectively to develop students' ability to analyse and evaluate what they are learning.
- Improve communication with parents to involve them more closely in the work of the school.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory. Students' attainment on entry to the school is above average. In 2006, by the end of Year 9, students achieved standards that were above average and had improved on those in 2005. Students made satisfactory progress overall and good progress in English. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 11 were above average and had improved markedly on those in 2005. Students made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Those with learning difficulties or disabilities made satisfactory progress. School data for the current Year 11 indicates that examination results are likely to improve on last year. The school now sets increasingly challenging targets which most students achieve. In the sixth form, standards are broadly average and students make satisfactory progress from their starting points which are slightly below the national average.

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

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal development is good. The school attaches importance to their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development which is also good. Students speak warmly about the special feel of the school, and how they are confident in expressing their faith because of the sensitive encouragement provided. Students' involvement in personal study projects on Islam has opened up debate, encouraging a better understanding of living in modern day Britain. Behaviour is good and students' attitudes to learning have improved, with most enjoying lessons. Attendance remains above the national average. Students report that there is little bullying and that they know who to see if they need help. They know how to keep themselves safe. The uptake of sports is good and students know what they should and should not be

eating as part of a balanced diet. Students are making a good contribution to the community through the reinvigorated whole school and year councils, peer mentor roles and fund raising days. They are increasingly able to influence change, because their views are actively sought, listened to and acted upon. A change in uniform for Year 10 is one example which students particularly valued. It is an indication of students' strength of character that they organise their own work experience placements and undertake practice interviews. Students are prepared adequately for life in the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is now a common framework for the planning of lessons and, in the majority, teaching is well planned but practice is not yet consistent. Students are not always fully challenged, especially through class question and answer activities. An enthusiastic teaching and learning group and coaching team are helping teachers to share good practice. Where teaching is good, a variety of activities is used effectively to refresh students' knowledge and encourage their progress. Students are actively involved in evaluating their learning against their targets and understand what they need to do in order to improve. Students enjoy lessons where they learn through discussion and practical activities, but this is not yet embedded across the school. In too many lessons there is insufficient pace and challenge and, as a result, students lose concentration.

Teachers mark work regularly and their comments generally indicate what students need to do in order to improve. There are new but thorough systems in place for setting targets and for reviewing students' progress. In the best practice, these are used effectively to identify those needing additional support to reach their targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school accurately identified that it is currently too limited in Key Stage 4, with a focus largely on academic courses. A range of vocational GCSEs, dance and drama has been prepared for September 2007. The planned changes reflect the school's commitment to improve students' achievement and to meet their needs. The school's specialist status has had clear impact through strong relationships with local industry and work with local primary schools. A well established technology competition, involving Year 6 and Year 10 students, brings together many aspects of the school's links with other organisations. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being through Industry Days and mock interviews in Year 10. They enjoy their work experience placements which are well matched to individual interests and build their independence in preparation for the world of work. There is a wide range of extra-curricular trips and activities that add further to student experience and contribute to their personal development.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. This is a warm and friendly school. The quality of its academic guidance has improved to the good standard of its pastoral care. Students have a good understanding of the levels they are working at and what they need to do to get better. For example, students knew exactly how to improve their sculptures in an art lesson and set themselves targets based on this knowledge. There are regular systems for checking on students' progress, but the school recognises that these are relatively new and require refinement. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities has improved, with a sharp focus on improving their learning. Students adopt safe practices and behave well towards each other because of the strong ethos promoted by the school. Child protection and associated procedures for ensuring students' safety are satisfactory. After a recent review, further staff training and a revision of policy are planned. Access to careers guidance is good and students have good opportunities to visit local colleges before making choices about their education at the end of Year 11.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The executive headteacher and new senior team have a clear understanding of the school and, since January 2007, have established effective management systems within the school to promote improvement. The school's middle leaders are working hard to implement the new systems with good support from the local authority. There are now effective systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning and students' progress. Subject leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas. There has been improvement in teaching but agreed strategies are not yet used consistently enough and, therefore, are yet to have full impact on students' achievement. Improvements since the last inspection, particularly in communication and greater teamwork, the tracking of students' progress and accurate self-evaluation, show that there is good capacity for further improvement. Governors are clear about the need for further changes and improvements and now have satisfactory systems in place to hold the school to account. They work well with the executive headteacher to provide strategic direction for the school. Sound financial planning has ensured that resources are deployed efficiently in support of learning. There are good partnerships with local schools, colleges, employers and the community. However, in the questionnaires, parents expressed concern that their views were not taken into account and inspectors agreed that they should be more involved in the work of the school.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>College 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>	3	3
How well does the college work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	3
The effectiveness of the college'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>	3	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	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
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	3	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
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	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this college require special measures?	No	
Does this college require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 June 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of The National School, a C of E Technology College, Hucknall, NG15 7DB

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the team, for your cooperation during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing your views. We were impressed by your friendliness and confidence.

The inspection found that your school has improved in the past year, since we last visited, and now provides you with a satisfactory education. Results in Years 9 and 11 have improved and are above average. Most of you make satisfactory progress. You are now set more challenging targets and understand better how to improve your work. Most of you behave well, but a small number do not pay attention in lessons where teaching is less effective. You told us that there was little bullying or racism in school and that you felt safe. The curriculum provided for Years 10 and 11 has been expanded to offer more practical subjects from next September. You are well supported by your tutors and pastoral staff and receive good advice on careers and choices about your future education. You told us that the whole school and year councils are increasingly influential in the school. The school's new leadership team have made significant improvements in a short time. Your school has retained its friendly atmosphere but also focuses strongly on your success. The sixth form is satisfactory. You told us that you appreciated being treated like adults. However, the standards achieved and students' progress are broadly average at present.

There are some aspects of the school's work that need to improve further. Teaching needs to improve through all your teachers using the best practice more consistently. In particular, teachers should use discussion and probing questions to get you to think about your work and test out your understanding more. Communication with parents needs to improve so that they know more about the work of the school and your progress.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg HMI