

Studley High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125771
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	307237
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Clive Kempton HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	748
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Large
Headteacher	Elaine Young
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Crooks Lane Studley B80 7QX
Telephone number	01527 852478
Fax number	01527 854469

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Studley High School serves the village of Studley and surrounding villages in south Warwickshire. A significant number of pupils choose to attend the school from Worcestershire, including Redditch, because of its reputation. As a specialist college in humanities and music from September 2006, the school is making close links with the community. As part of this programme, through its planned multimedia centre, the school aims to provide valuable community facilities. As a medium-sized school, Studley is able to know its pupils well as individuals, whilst at the same time being able to provide an exceptionally wide choice of curriculum through its collaborative work with local colleges and training providers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Studley High is a good and improving school where pupils make good progress as they move through the school and achieve standards that are above the national average. Every pupil in 2006 achieved at least five GCSE grades, a considerable achievement. This is due to the outstanding leadership of the new headteacher, who drives with purpose, rigour and a determination to make sure that every pupil achieves their full potential. She is ably supported by a strong leadership group who share her commitment and passion. Together, they have a strong capacity to make the necessary improvements and a tangible desire to make the school even better.

In their own accurate self-evaluation of the school, the senior staff state that 'over the past 18 months, there have been significant innovations in almost every aspect of the school and the staff have embraced these changes with enthusiasm and professionalism'. Inspectors fully endorse this statement, although some staff have embraced these changes quicker than others.

Because pupils learn a lot, they want to come to school and attendance and behaviour are good. Parents report that their children 'get up in the morning and want to come to school'. Poor behaviour is not tolerated and the minority of pupils, usually boys, who fail to comply know their actions will be swiftly dealt with. As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are taught how to lead healthy lifestyles and how to become responsible members of the community, for example, through their charity work and links with a school in Africa. The secure basic skills they learn in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) ensure that they will all be capable of securing employment and make a good contribution to their future economic well-being.

None of this happens without good teaching and a strong curriculum. The school has good links with other local schools and colleges and works tirelessly to make sure that pupils are motivated by appropriate courses at Key Stage 4. This shows how well teachers care, guide and support their pupils, both pastorally and academically. This view is shared by parents. One commented, 'It is a supportive, caring, safe environment'. Whilst this is the case in the vast majority of lessons, there remains some variation, notably in aspects of teachers' lesson planning and in their expectations of what pupils can achieve.

The successful designation as a humanities (English and drama) and music college in September 2006 has had an immediate impact on the school ethos, the staffing in the specialist subjects, and through the plans for new specialist accommodation. Of particular note is the impact on able primary school pupils who come to the school for a weekly English lesson. This additional challenge is impacting on their standards of attainment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that learning objectives are clear to pupils and measurable by teachers in every lesson.
- Through coaching and modelling, ensure that all staff share their best teaching practice to achieve more consistency across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average overall in the national tests. The 2006 results have risen from those of 2005. Standards have improved steadily in mathematics and English but more slowly in science, where standards are average. This is due to staffing issues and the organisation of the curriculum. Pupils make good progress overall from Year 7 to Year 9 on account of the exceptional progress made in mathematics, balanced with the satisfactory progress in science.

By the time pupils leave the school in Year 11, standards are above average. Pupils' achievement is good, given that they join the school with broadly average standards in Year 7. Standards are rising, evident from the improving GCSE results in recent years, which are increasing faster than the national average. In the 2006 results, 68% of pupils achieved five A* to C grades, and an impressive 59% of these included English and mathematics. There was also an improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the highest A* and A grades. Progress is good in English and mathematics and average in science. Boys achieved higher standards than girls in Years 10 and 11 because aspects of curriculum did not fully meet the needs of a minority of girls. This has now been rectified. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress.

The reasons for the above-average standards, rising achievement and good progress throughout the school have been the school's focus on improving teaching and learning, broadening the curriculum to support less well-motivated pupils, and raising the achievement of higher-attaining pupils, particularly in English. Standards of achievement in the specialist subjects are good and the school is meeting its published targets for GCSE, Key Stage 3 and specialist school status.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The overall personal development and well-being of pupils is good. The school creates the right environment in which pupils can mature and feel good about themselves. The school is using its specialist status well as a humanities and music college to promote pupils' cultural development. This has added a unique international dimension through its links with four schools in South Africa, raising money to sponsor African children, and various other charitable works. Attractive displays of work in corridors, classrooms and in the art room celebrate students' achievements and provide an uplifting learning environment. Outstanding work in RE is making a significant contribution to spiritual and moral development, although opportunities are missed for collective worship. At a time of transition in the delivery of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship, the contribution of this area of the curriculum to pupils' personal development is satisfactory.

Pupils really enjoy school and are positive in their attitudes to work. There is a calm, orderly atmosphere around the school, as most pupils behave responsibly, respecting the fair treatment they receive from teachers. Attendance is above average, continuing the improvement achieved last year. The school does much to promote healthy living through the curriculum and by encouraging pupils to be active in sport. The healthy meals provided in the canteen have been welcomed by pupils and parents. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are confident to approach staff and mentors with any problems. The senior pupils are responsible young people, many of whom serve the school well as prefects and mentors to younger students, growing in maturity as a result. The school council is an effective body for voicing students' views and is

assisting the school management in seeking further improvements. There are good opportunities through the business partnership vocational courses and the Connexions service to prepare pupils for their future careers. The taught careers curriculum, however, is currently less well represented.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, ranging in quality from outstanding to satisfactory. The result of the good teaching is that all groups of pupils make good progress.

In the outstanding lessons observed, teachers set work in imaginative ways that challenge all pupils, including the gifted and talented. ICT is very well employed to speed the pace of learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure, and relationships are good. Their enthusiasm for their subject is contagious; consequently they promote pupils' confidence in their ability to succeed. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are significant features of these lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan learning activities that relate to pupils' lives and interests. Assessment is used effectively to share learning targets with pupils, so that they have a clear understanding of their progress and their next steps in learning, for example, in mathematics and English, two of the highest-achieving subjects. However, this good practice is not consistent across all subjects.

The above features are largely absent from the less successful lessons observed. Quite often, these lessons are too teacher led, have insufficient focus on the learning outcomes, and leave insufficient time for extended work or adequate plenary sessions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets national requirements and the needs of pupils well.

The school offers all pupils in Key Stage 4 an impressive range of vocational courses, providing them with pathways into training and employment. It has developed good links with local colleges. The wide variety of options available at Year 10 is outstanding. For example, courses in construction, health and social care and catering are amongst the choices. The arrangements made for supporting pupils with additional learning needs are also good.

The organisation of personal, social and health education has changed this year from timetabled lessons to a series of whole-day events throughout the year. Delivered by outside speakers and teachers with specialist knowledge, this approach has the potential for the improved delivery of the subjects. There are, however, concerns with regard to coverage of the curriculum, assessment of pupils' progress and plotting the cross-curricular contribution of subjects to this area.

Specialist status is having a good influence on the curriculum as pupils benefit from a range of new courses that motivate them to learn; for example, media studies. Gifted and talented pupils in Year 10 are 'fast-tracked' to undertake GCSE English one year early and are all predicted to get A* to C grades.

Although curriculum time for physical education is marginally less than normally found, there are good opportunities for extra-curricular involvement in sport and these are very well supported

by the pupils. They benefit from a wide range of enrichment activities, including educational visits, school trips abroad to places such as Iceland and America, and an interesting range of external visitors who visit the school. The recent production of the musical *Grease* enabled pupils of all ages, and staff, to come together to take an active and enjoyable role. All these additional activities raise pupils' self-esteem, broaden their horizons and develop their cultural awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that all students feel valued and respected. The new pastoral structure places teaching assistants in responsible roles alongside key stage co-ordinators, and is proving very effective in providing high quality care and support. The new Student Support Centre is providing well for pupils who are not coping in the mainstream, and enables many to return to their courses quickly. Vulnerable pupils are well supported too and child protection procedures are understood by all staff. All requirements for the health and safety of pupils are observed. The clear, well- implemented system of rewards and sanctions is also ensuring that all pupils behave as expected and concentrate on their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and given concentrated tuition in Key Stage 3 to improve basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Adequate provision is made for gifted and talented pupils to extend their learning.

The school gives good academic guidance to pupils by setting them challenging targets and monitoring progress thoroughly. Time has been allocated for tutors to interview tutees on a regular basis, and this is appreciated by pupils and parents. There are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback to pupils, but the overall effect is successful in boosting pupils' performance. Pastoral information is being computerised, so that data can be analysed and used to inform intervention strategies. The pastoral team and the new systems and procedures in place show great potential to improve the quality of care still further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is strong and principled. She has made rapid improvements to the school in a short space of time. Issues raised at the last report such as line management responsibility and accountability have been clearly mapped in a grid of responsibilities and all staff with posts of responsibility are in no doubt of their roles. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are valued for their unique role in the school. Some teaching assistants' advanced skills have been recognised and they have taken on more responsibility, such as managing the school website. Prefects have been appointed and support the school staff well in aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. As a result, improvement since the last inspection is good.

The leadership group is good too and supports the headteacher well. All have ownership of the shared vision and strategic decision making. The self-evaluation document produced by the school is an active document, regularly reviewed and amended so that its accuracy and potency are enhanced. The self-evaluation processes undertaken by middle managers are currently more embryonic but have the potential for equal impact. These subject leaders are now held to account for standards achieved in their subject areas through a rigorous, annual post-results

review and analysis session with the headteacher, and regular curriculum review meetings with the leadership group.

Monitoring of every aspect of the school is regular and feeds into the school development plan and the self-evaluation document. However, the outcomes of the monitoring of teaching are not systematically collated to inform whole-school developments.

Governance is good overall. The recently appointed chair of governors is outstanding and holds the school strongly to account for standards achieved. He has had a good involvement in the development of the self-evaluation document. Other governors are developing well in their roles too and take an active part in the life of the school. Other outside professionals involved with the school recognise that the school is well organised; staff keep their eye on the ball, it is 'good and getting better' and there is a 'fantastic willingness to work collaboratively'.

Financial management is secure. After a period of 15 years of deficit budget, the school has plans in place to completely eradicate the deficit budget this financial year. The school provides good value for money.

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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>	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?	2
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

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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	2
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	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

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Studley High School, Studley, West Midlands B80 7QX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school in April. I thought you would like to know the outcomes of the inspection and what you could all do to make the school even better.

- Your parents think you go to a good school and we agree.
- You all make good progress with your work as you move through the school and achieve standards that are better than a lot of schools in the country.
- You were nearly all well behaved in lessons and around the school, although one or two of you let the school down.
- You have a wide range of courses to choose from in Years 10 and 11.
- Your teachers work very hard and prepare interesting lessons for you.
- Those of you who need extra help with your work get good support from teachers and other adults.
- You have got a really good headteacher who is very determined that you all do well.
- Staff give up a lot of their time to make sure you have lots of opportunities to go on school trips that broaden your experiences.
- You are proud of your school and rightly so.
- We were impressed with the range of charity work you do and your awareness of those less fortunate than yourselves in South Africa.

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

- make sure that you are always clear about what you are supposed to learn in each lesson and that your teachers check you have understood the work
- make sure that all lessons are as good as the best.

Clive Kempton HMI Her Majesty's Inspector