

# Finham Park School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103738
<b>Local Authority</b>	Coventry
<b>Inspection number</b>	308407
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth Westbrook

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1467
6th form	302
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Burns
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Logan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Green Lane Coventry CV3 6EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	02476 418135
<b>Fax number</b>	02476 840803

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Finham Park is a large community school with a large sixth form on the outskirts of Coventry. In 2003, the school became a specialist mathematics and computing college. It is also a training school. About one quarter of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds which is higher than average with a large majority from an Indian heritage. The number for whom English is an additional language is also above average, but the number at an early stage of learning English is small. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average as is the number eligible for free school meals.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

the progress of students towards their targets and their likely achievement

the effectiveness of provision at Key Stage 4 in supporting the achievement of less able and less motivated students

how effectively the school's training and development programme is addressing the variation in standards and achievement between departments

gathering evidence from lesson observations, discussions with students and staff, parental questionnaires.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The quality of education provided in both the school and the sixth form is good, with outstanding features. The school has improved substantially since its last inspection three years ago. Underpinning this improvement is good leadership and management at all levels, driven by the extremely clear vision and direction of the headteacher and other senior leaders. This focuses firmly on raising the achievement of all students by improving the curriculum and teaching and enabling students to thrive in a safe and caring community. As a result, students enjoy coming to school immensely and attend well. They enjoy lessons and other activities and have a sense of sharing in the school's improvement. They feel that staff listen to their views, and most participate readily in the opportunities available to take responsibility as mentors and school councillors. Good relationships develop between members of the school community. All this contributes to the outstanding moral and social development of students. To extend the quality of its provision, the school has developed a wide range of excellent partnerships.

By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science and in a number of subjects. The number attaining 5+ A\*-C grades including English and mathematics is also above average and a substantial rise is forecast for 2008. The inspection evidence agrees with this forecast. Students achieve less well in some design and technology courses and in modern foreign languages. Standards have improved substantially in all the core subjects at Key Stage 3 since the time of the last inspection. The improvement at Key Stage 4 has been more modest, but the inspection found that the progress that Year 11 students are making towards examination targets in 2008 is even better this year. In relation to students' starting points when they enter the school, this represents good achievement at all stages. The school's leaders are not complacent, however, and rigorously evaluate strengths and weaknesses in their work to identify improvements. Examination and test performance is analysed in depth, including the performance of different groups within the school. Because of this, the school has rightly identified the few subjects where students achieve less well, and why this is the case. The school's status as a training school has put in place an excellent training and development programme. Therefore, the school is well placed to share its good and exceptional practice in these subjects. The thoroughness of the school's evaluation and improvement record indicate that capacity for further improvement is good in the school and outstanding in the sixth form.

Teaching and learning are good overall, but the amount of good and outstanding teaching is increasing. The training school initiative has led to improvements in teaching and learning across the school by establishing a successful learning community where all colleagues share their skills and expertise through learning forums. This is having a positive impact on students' achievement because lesson planning focuses on meeting the different needs of students within the class. Students respond well to this, and their attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour is good. They talk animatedly about their enjoyment of lessons and 'not wanting to miss school'. In most of their lessons, students receive good feedback on their work in a variety of appropriate ways. They find it helpful in indicating what they need to do to improve. The school plan is addressing the inconsistencies that remain in the quality of this feedback.

The school makes good use of data to raise achievement by setting challenging targets and monitoring students' progress carefully. A range of effective strategies and additional support are employed when underachievement is identified. The development of this area of the school's work has been a recent focus for improvement and the inspection found that provision is now

more effectively supporting the achievements of less able and less motivated students. For example, the breakthrough project and creative partnerships are contributing to students having improved self-esteem and greater motivation to succeed. The school has in place an information system called TEAM. This helps staff to track progress, behaviour and attendance more efficiently. Parents also find TEAM 'very useful to keep track on a daily basis of our child's progress', but 'frustrating when not filled in'.

The school's good curriculum has become increasingly personalised to meet the needs of all learners. As well as providing a wide range of traditional academic subjects including, for example, separate sciences, the school has a developing range of courses that include a vocational dimension. It meets the academic aspirations and personal development needs of students well. As a result, their personal development and well-being are good. They understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle. They are involved in planning healthy eating options within the catering service. Large numbers walk or cycle to school and most take part in a wide range of sporting activities. There is a good range of additional activities that enrich the learning of many students in the school, but fewer activities promote spiritual and cultural development. This is also the view of a small number of parents. The effective contribution of the provision to support students' personal development and the strong encouragement to fulfil their potential ensure that they are well equipped for the next stage of their education and future economic well-being.

Mathematics and computing specialist college status has had a positive impact on provision and outcomes for all students. Standards in mathematics have improved throughout the school and are well above average. In Year 9, they are exceptionally high. A large number of students in Key Stage 4 take statistics as an additional course and reach above average standards. A slower start was made with improvements in computing but now, with more time, appropriate staffing and equipment in place, standards are beginning to rise rapidly. The links with partner primary schools are well established and their staff and students are benefiting from the school's enhanced resources.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that students feel safe in school and that they are well protected. Required checks for safeguarding students are carefully carried out. Students feel that they can approach all staff for help should they need it; 'we always know we can talk to them'. They comment particularly on the way that seeing the headteacher and other senior staff around school reassures them and contributes to an orderly community. An outstanding feature of the school's provision is the care and support provided by the Personalised Learning Centre (PLC). It ensures that coherent support is targeted at appropriate students, both those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are vulnerable in other ways. Both parents and students value the support they receive from the centre: 'the staff are great and very supportive to pupils and parents alike'. Of the parental questionnaires returned for the inspection, the large majority are entirely positive and appreciative of the school's work. A small number felt their views were sought but not acted on by the school, but many more parents shared the following view: 'I am pleased with the way teachers contact me before things become a big issue. It's good that they will pick up the phone or email if they have a concern.'

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the sixth form are outstanding. The senior leadership's evaluation of the provision, matched against results, has been very thorough and accurate. Weaknesses are carefully identified and addressed. As a result, standards are above average

and achievement is good, although there is some variation between subjects. Students achieve well in mathematics, psychology and vocational information and communication technology. Students have achieved less well in computing and general studies. The great majority of students complete the courses that they start. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection three years ago. This excellent record of evaluation leading to improved standards indicates that the capacity for further improvement is outstanding. The school's training school initiative has led to improvements in teaching and learning within the sixth form. Students confirm that there is more emphasis on active and independent learning. They welcome this and the contribution it makes to their learning. The good curriculum meets the needs of students. Recently, the International Baccalaureate has been established effectively. A very constructive partnership within a local federation is leading to a developing range of vocational courses. Creative use of community activities broadens students' experiences. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that the students' progress towards their targets in subjects is monitored carefully and intervention is timely and effective when causes for concern are identified. Tutors support students very well with their personal development and attendance. Personal development and well-being are good. Students develop as articulate, supportive, constructively critical individuals who are proud of their school and feel respected and valued. There is a high level of enjoyment, and attendance has markedly improved.

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

- Ensure that the sharing of good and exceptional practice focuses tightly on the improvement of students' achievement and standards in the few subjects that the school has rightly identified as performing less well.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

<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>	2	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	1
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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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**

21 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Finham Park School, Coventry CV3 6EA

Thank you for the help you provided when we visited your school recently. We received a very warm welcome and your comments were very helpful to us. The quality of the education provided throughout the school, including the sixth form, is good, with some features that are outstanding. The quality has improved in a number of ways since the school was inspected three years ago.

The standard of your work is above average and your achievement is good from when you enter the school or sixth form. We agree with the school that there is room for improvement in some subjects so have asked that the school ensures that the good and exceptional teaching and learning which we saw, and you told us about, is shared in all subjects.

The opportunities provided through the school's good curriculum and other activities lead to good personal development and well-being. You clearly very much enjoy school, have a sense of belonging to the community, and many of you feel you make an important contribution to its improvement and that your views are valued. You readily accept responsibility as mentors or with the school council. You understand how to lead a healthy life and many of you take part in sport and other activities to support this. You feel safe at school and welcome the fact that you can approach staff for help when you need it. The care, guidance and support you receive are good, and outstanding in the sixth form. Your teachers and other adults are committed to ensuring that everyone achieves his or her potential. There is a good level of support to help you make the right choices for your future, and there is also much additional support for you in times of greater need. The Personalised Learning Centre plays an important role in this.

You can help the school to improve even further by striving to do your very best in this year's tests and examinations.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector