

# Pedmore Technology College and Community School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103859
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dudley
<b>Inspection number</b>	308441
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Joan Greenfield

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>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	785
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Evans
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Kemp
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Grange Lane Pedmore Stourbridge DY9 7HS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01384 816660
<b>Fax number</b>	01384 816659

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<b>Age group</b>	11-16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 October 2007
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to administration error

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average secondary school. It specialises in technology and is also part of an Excellence Cluster initiative to tackle underachievement and social exclusion. The majority of students are White British, but a higher proportion than average are from minority ethnic, mainly Pakistani, backgrounds. Considerably more students than average are eligible for free school meals. An above-average and increasing proportion of students speaks English as an additional language, and many are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. In recent times, more students than usually found joined the school at times other than at the normal transfer times. An acting principal, who is one of the two vice-principals, currently leads the school during the current absence of the principal.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education for its students. The good pastoral support and guidance that students receive contribute effectively to aspects of their personal development. The school's inclusive approach means that students with additional needs are given valuable support to succeed. The successful links the school has established, with a wide range of external agencies, to support such students is particularly noteworthy. Academic standards have been below average in recent years and students have underachieved when account is taken of their attainment on entry. However, standards are slowly improving. The school's provisional results in the national tests in Year 9 for 2007 were broadly average, with a higher proportion of students reaching the expected levels than in previous years, especially in English, which is stronger than mathematics and science. In Years 7 to 9, students make satisfactory progress. They continue to do so in Years 10 and 11, although this progress has yet to be realised in better GCSE performance. The GCSE examination results have been below average for the past four years. This picture is partly a reflection of the legacy of underachievement in the past in Key Stage 3. It also reflects the school's difficulties in appointing specialist staff in some subjects, especially in mathematics and science, and the arrangements for early entry to some GCSE examinations. Improvements in the quality of teaching, brought about by more stable staffing and better monitoring of work in classrooms, are slowly leading to better progress and higher standards. Some students make good progress because of effective teaching but the overall quality of teaching is not robust enough to ensure that all groups consistently make better than satisfactory progress. Teachers' planning often does not identify clearly enough the learning focus of the lesson, or provide work that meets the range of abilities in the class. In addition, some teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently high and the assessment of students' work does not help them enough to know what they need to do to improve. Although students are set targets, these are not always challenging enough, or modified in the light of their subsequent progress. The school's specialist area has had an impact on teaching but not consistently enough on students' learning. Involvement in the Excellence Cluster is sharpening the focus on meeting the needs of gifted and talented students. Most students really enjoy their learning and concentrate well in lessons. Much progress has been made since the last inspection in improving students' behaviour and their attendance. As a result, attendance is satisfactory, although remaining slightly below the national figures. The poor behaviour of a minority of students, identified as a key issue in the last inspection report, has been tackled firmly and with considerable success, although not wholly eradicated. The senior leadership team provides clear direction to the work of the school and has a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through a regular cycle of monitoring. These activities are not yet rigorous or evaluative enough to accelerate progress. It also means that the school's own view of its performance is too generous at times. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Senior and middle leaders are enthusiastic about contributing to the school's improvement but do not yet have clear enough guidelines and accountability systems to be fully effective. The governing body undertakes its responsibilities satisfactorily but does not do enough to hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance, especially in raising standards further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Set students appropriately challenging targets in all subjects and raise teachers' expectations of the standards that students are capable of reaching.

- Ensure greater consistency in the use of assessment to check students' progress and to show them what they need to do to improve.
- Ensure that lesson planning focuses specifically on students' learning and provides more challenging work to meet their needs more effectively.
- Sharpen the whole-school systems for checking and evaluating the quality of the school's performance and make senior and middle leaders more accountable for improving provision in their areas of responsibility. A small proportion of the schools whose 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**

Students' achievement is satisfactory, although standards remain below the national average by Year 11. From their average starting points on entry to the school, they make satisfactory progress in Years 7 to 9. The unconfirmed national test results show an improvement in 2007 and were broadly average overall, indicating that students made satisfactory progress. Standards improved in maths, English and science, with more students reaching the expected Level 5 or above than in previous years, especially in English. In 2007, the unconfirmed results at five or more grades A\* to C remained below the national average but were close to the school's own targets. Students make satisfactory progress overall in Years 10 and 11, although the improvement in standards has not been as marked as in Years 7 to 9. A range of factors has depressed GCSE standards in the past and the school is steadily addressing these; for example, by improving the foundations of learning in Key Stage 3. Students, including those with additional learning and other needs, or those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Most students really enjoy learning, becoming fully engaged and keen to complete their tasks, especially when lessons are stimulating and they are challenged to do their best. They are keen to do well and appreciate the support they receive from staff. Lower-attaining students speak highly of the boost they get from attending the breakfast club. Most students behave well in lessons but at times some low-level disruption, by a small minority of students, reduces the pace of learning for the majority. Behaviour between lessons, at break time and in the canteen, is orderly. A considerable number of parents express concerns about the standard of behaviour and discipline, including bullying, but nothing out of the ordinary was seen during the inspection. Attendance is satisfactory. Recently it has improved dramatically through the school's efforts. Students get on well together and make a good contribution to the community. Many participate in decision making through the school council or by acting as prefects, as well as supporting local charities and environmental projects. They have a clear sense of right and wrong. Students say they feel very safe in school and know that any instances of bullying are dealt with rapidly by staff. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly the younger ones, are integrated well in classrooms, although they tend to form separate groups during break and lunch times. Most students appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle, choosing from a good menu of healthy options at lunchtime and attending the many sporting activities available. Students are prepared satisfactorily for life beyond school.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The teaching is satisfactory overall and much is good. Most teachers use their subject knowledge well to provide students with a variety of tasks, although in some cases these do not challenge students enough. Relationships between teachers and students are positive and most lessons take place in a calm and productive atmosphere. The majority of teachers manage their classes effectively. At times, lessons contain too much talking by the teacher, proceed at a slow pace and lack challenging questions to involve students fully in their learning. This leads to passive learning, inattention and occasionally unsatisfactory behaviour, which hinders learning and results in poor quality work. Lesson planning is variable and does not always have a sharp enough focus on what students are to learn or identify clearly enough how the work will meet the needs of all students in the class. Where teachers expect a lot, they drive learning by sharp questioning of students, making them reflect on their understanding. Good lessons contain a wide range of questions, challenging tasks and activities that students enjoy doing. For example, in a good Year 9 mathematics lesson, students were helped to understand the assessment criteria, apply them by discussing examples of work in pairs, and then decide how they could improve future work. The school regularly gathers information about students' attainment. Levels and grades are widely used for setting targets but assessment practice is inconsistent and many students are not provided with enough information on how to improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

A clear focus on helping students reach their full potential underpins the school's curriculum and the strong emphasis on personal, social and health education enhances their personal development. The curriculum is reviewed regularly, although this is not done through a clearly defined set of curricular principles. The time allocated for physical education in Key Stage 4 does not fully meet requirements. There are pathways and flexible choices to help students develop and pursue their interests, but the curriculum is not broad enough to meet the needs of all students in Years 10 and 11. The school is aware of this and intends to offer specialist diplomas in future. In Years 10 and 11, most students study subjects of their choice from the courses provided. Students value the opportunities, but guidance at this stage is not yet strong enough to enable them to make more appropriate choices or to have a more significant impact on raising achievement. Students are entered for GCSE English at the end of Year 10 and the early-entry policy also extends to some mathematics groups. Whilst this opens up chances for students to study additional subjects, it limits the final grade achieved by some. The impact of the school's specialist status in technology is evident in its work in primary schools and the wider community. Good examples exist of shared curriculum projects, for example, between technology and science. The provision for information and communication technology has improved because of the school's specialism. It has had a positive impact on teaching but its use by students to improve their own learning is inconsistent. A significant number of students attend the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided and this adds greatly to their enjoyment and personal development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

The welfare and safety of students is paramount and, as a result, pastoral care is good. Attendance is carefully tracked, with parents and students fully involved in the drive to ensure students see the importance of attending regularly. Staff follow up absence or lack of punctuality swiftly. Students who are in danger of falling behind are identified early and good measures are taken to ensure they remain fully engaged. The school is successful in keeping the small number of disaffected students either learning in school or at nearby colleges, providing a flexible programme as required. Systems for child protection and keeping students safe are robust. The school works effectively with a wide variety of agencies and professionals to support students with specific needs. The transition from one stage of education to another is smooth as students have good information on which to base their decisions.

Systems for assessing and recording students' academic progress are comprehensive and they provide a useful overview that can pinpoint underachievement. However, this information is not used as effectively as it might as it does not form an integral part of teaching and learning, for example, in helping students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Not enough is done to update or modify students' targets to ensure that they are always sufficiently challenging.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The senior leadership group works well together, setting a clear direction that is communicated effectively. As a result, staff are aware of whole-school priorities. Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their regular cycle of monitoring. They have worked collaboratively to produce the school improvement plan, which focuses appropriately on raising achievement and standards. Departments base their own planning on this document, thus ensuring a common platform for improvement. Although much checking of progress and provision takes place, not enough is done to use this information to evaluate the quality of what is happening across the school, for example, the impact of teaching on learning and raising students' aspirations. Initiatives to raise standards are not having the maximum effect because their success is not evaluated rigorously or adjusted quickly enough in the light of their impact. Middle managers are enthusiastic innovators and want to play a crucial role in determining the way forward but have not yet received enough professional guidance and accountability from senior staff. The recently formed teaching and learning forum is a good example of their forward thinking. The value placed on all members of staff has created good teamwork and collaboration, resulting in a real sense of community, which is one of the school's strengths. Specialist technology status is well planned and managed and has led to enhanced opportunities for students within the school and the community. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They have a satisfactory awareness of the school's priorities and they offer support through their visits to the school and governing body meetings. Currently, they do not hold senior staff sufficiently to account for the standards students reach in the school.

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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
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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

<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
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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
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**

- 5 October 2007 Dear Students Inspection of Pedmore Technology College and Community School, Stourbridge, DY9 7HS Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting some of you in discussion groups and finding out what you think about the school. These discussions, together with looking at your work in lessons, helped us to find out how well your school is doing. This letter is to tell you what we found. The school provides you with a satisfactory quality of education. Standards remain below average by Year 11 but are slowly rising in the school, although not consistently across all subjects. Most of you work hard in lessons and make satisfactory progress. However, many of you are capable of making faster progress than you currently do. Although the teaching is satisfactory, we think you need more good teaching if this is to happen. Most of you are courteous and polite to one another, and have positive attitudes about the school. You told us that you like being in school and that your teachers give you the right kind of support, especially when you have difficulties and problems. A small number of you, though, do not attend school regularly enough. The curriculum is satisfactory but does not fully meet your needs and interests. The care, guidance and support you receive are also satisfactory. The senior staff who lead and manage the school have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They are committed to helping you do the very best that you possibly can and to improving what the school has to offer you. We have asked them to do four specific things to improve the school's work.
- Set you more challenging targets and have higher expectations of what you can achieve.
- Use assessment information more effectively to check your progress and help you improve your work further.
- Provide you with more challenging work to meet your needs more effectively.
- Check the quality of the school's performance more rigorously, including the work of senior and middle leaders. You can help by attending school regularly and always doing your very best. Yours sincerely Mrs J Greenfield Lead inspector

**Annex B**

5 October 2007

Dear Students

**Inspection of Pedmore Technology College and Community School,  
Stourbridge, DY9 7HS**

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The curriculum is satisfactory but does not fully meet your needs and interests. The care, guidance and support you receive are also satisfactory. The senior staff who lead and manage the school have a clear understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They are committed to helping you do the very best that you possibly can and to improving what the school has to offer you. We have asked them to do four specific things to improve the school's work.

- Set you more challenging targets and have higher expectations of what you can achieve.
- Use assessment information more effectively to check your progress and help you improve your work further.
- Provide you with more challenging work to meet your needs more effectively.
- Check the quality of the school's performance more rigorously, including the work of senior and middle leaders.

You can help by attending school regularly and always doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Greenfield  
Lead inspector