

# The Corbet School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123594
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314648
<b>Inspection date</b>	16 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith HMI

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>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	710
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Golland
<b>Headteacher</b>	R J Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Eyton Lane Baschurch Shrewsbury SY4 2AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01939 260296
<b>Fax number</b>	01939 262009

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. HMI evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement in Key Stage 4, the quality of provision in Key Stage 4, and leadership and management. HMI gathered evidence from interviews with governors, staff and pupils, lesson observations, analysis of documentation and observations of the school during the working day. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but HMI 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.

## Description of the school

This Specialist Technology College draws pupils from mainly rural areas. The majority of pupils travel to school by bus. The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or learning English as an additional language are well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils attend the school from a mixture of different backgrounds; some are very favourable but others are areas with significant rural deprivation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The Corbet is an outstanding school. Pupils really enjoy school because they achieve exceptionally well and they feel that staff support them magnificently. Pupils enter the school with standards slightly above average. In Key Stage 3, pupils consistently make excellent progress, amongst the best in the country, to gain exceptionally high tests results. Pupils attained exceedingly high standards at Key Stage 4 in 2005; in the following two years results fell slightly, but accurate school records show that attainment is back to this very high level. This shows excellent achievement whilst the pupils are at school. Last year three quarters of the pupils gained five or more higher passes at GCSE, with the vast majority of these including English and mathematics. Results in science, English and mathematics were particularly good. Results in French were high, demonstrating a significant improvement since the previous inspection and the increased significance of the subject within the school. Results in technology were good and the school met most of its challenging targets, including those for its specialist status. Last year very nearly all pupils gained suitable qualifications because the school's strong support ensured any who were in danger of gaining very few or no passes were able to complete their studies. Pupils with learning difficulties also made very good progress. This shows the school's strong emphasis on inclusion.

Pupils feel very safe in school because of the excellent pastoral support. Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with very well when reported to staff. They say they like the clear guidelines for behaviour so that they know exactly what is expected. Incidents of poor behaviour are almost non-existent and behaviour around the school and in lessons is of the highest standard. This is indicative of pupils' very strong moral and social development. Pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong, and act accordingly. They know how to keep healthy and many take part in a wide variety of sporting activities. They have also influenced the type of food prepared by the school canteen, which now includes healthy options. Pupils' excellent personal development is supported by their extremely good spiritual and cultural development. Pupils say they enjoy the debate on spiritual issues in religious education lessons and also in many other subjects. They also participate in a wide variety of visits, including to art galleries, Paris, Lille, the battlefields in Belgium and local places of interest, which greatly enhances their cultural awareness.

Achievement is so high because pupils enjoy a variety of very good lessons that challenge them to make excellent progress. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good because they respect each other and pupils feel they are treated like responsible adults, which in turn makes them more responsible. Teachers use questioning techniques successfully and plan very interesting lessons that engage pupils' enthusiasm and ensure that work is well matched to their different abilities. The school has made good use of its specialist status to provide teachers with suitable electronic whiteboards to help deliver highly effective lessons and engage learners. Effective training has been provided so that all staff are able to make appropriate use of their whiteboards, often using video clips or other audio-visual resources to enhance lessons. Subject leaders have been very successful in working with their departments to ensure the quality of teaching remains high. Very useful departmental reviews, including the views of pupils, are used well to moderate departmental self-evaluations. These then feed into the accurate whole-school self-evaluation.

Pupils are very well prepared for their next phase of education or the world of work. The very good curriculum, including an exciting and well-attended range of extra-curricular activities,

meets pupils' needs very well. All pupils study a modern foreign language and technology in all years. Religious education is studied to GCSE level in Key Stage 4 and pupils say this is a highly interesting and challenging course. They particularly enjoy the way in which they have to argue their point of view and this, along with good English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, supports their excellent preparation for future employment, economic well-being and education. The curriculum is set to be further enhanced when the very good plans for the introduction of the diploma in ICT are implemented next September. Additionally, further diplomas are planned to be introduced over the next few years as part of the local consortium arrangements. The school works well with local providers to ensure a suitable curriculum for those learners who decide to follow specific courses, including work-based learning opportunities.

Pupils are keen to contribute to school life because they feel all staff really want them to succeed. Pupils know their targets and generally receive very good academic guidance. A change to the role of form tutors, so they have greater responsibility for the academic guidance of their tutor group, is in its early days and as yet is not consistent. Parents commented on how successful the school is in helping their children to settle in well when they arrive at the start of Year 7. Many pupils take a very active part in supporting the school community. They act as sports leaders or as 'peer supporters' and enjoy a wide variety of musical and drama events, including well-received productions each year. The school works well with local partner schools through its specialist status and also works with the local college to deliver courses to adults. The fact that so many pupils live a long way from the school and travel by bus makes it difficult for their contribution to the community to be better than good.

The leadership and management of the school are excellent and work well at all levels to ensure the school is constantly improving. The highly effective headteacher, supported by the extremely purposeful and efficient senior leadership team, gives a very strong lead and strategic direction to the work of the school. The governing body provide very good support and challenges when necessary. They rigorously ensure they fulfil their statutory duties, for example, by monitoring for racial equality, and ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for the safeguarding of all pupils. The school is not complacent and is always looking at how to get better. This demonstrates its excellent capacity to improve further.

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

- Ensure academic guidance is consistent with best practice, across all tutor groups.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	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

<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>	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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

17 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Corbet School Technology College, Baschurch, Shropshire SY4 2AX

I visited your school recently, met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. I was very impressed with your friendliness and helpfulness and how proud you are of your school. I can fully understand why you are so positive, and I agree that you attend an outstanding school. It makes sure you develop very well both academically and personally.

Staff care and support you very well, enabling you to make excellent progress. Standards are amongst the very best in England in Key Stage 3 and you achieve exceptionally well in your GCSE examinations. This is because you enjoy some extremely good lessons that ensure you are motivated and behave extremely well in school. You also said you felt staff treat you as adults and, in turn, you responded very well to this trust and support.

You have a very good understanding of what you need to do to become healthy. You told me that you enjoyed the very good curriculum and the excellent range of extra-curricular activities, especially sports and the performing arts. I know you were very pleased with the recently well received performance of 'We will rock you' and how focused the Year 11 rugby team was as it went off to take part in the county final. You were also proud of the good work you do supporting younger pupils in your school, as peer supporters or sports leaders. You know your targets and receive good academic guidance from your tutors. As yet this is in its early days and I feel this is an area your school could improve by making sure this guidance is consistent across all tutor groups.

Your school is extremely well led and managed and the views of yourselves and your parents are taken into full account to see how it can improve further. Staff are all very focused on seeing how the school can improve from its very high standard. They are looking forward to seeing how well the new diploma in ICT goes when it is introduced next September.

I wish you well in this excellent and supportive school. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith HMI

**Annex B**

17 April 2008

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