

Dyson Perrins CofE High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116995
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	326514
Inspection dates	22–23 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	925
Sixth form	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hugh Williams
Headteacher	David Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Yates Hay Road Malvern WR14 1WD
Telephone number	01684 564751
Fax number	01684 573765

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school with a small sixth form is one of two secondary schools serving Malvern. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to average. The proportion with statements of special educational needs is above average because the school has a special unit for students with autism and moderate learning difficulties. The vast majority of students are White British. A few from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning English. The school became a sports college in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate because students' achievement is inadequate and their standards are too low given their starting points and capabilities. Underachievement results from inadequate teaching and poor leadership and management. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection and many students are making inadequate progress as they move up through the school. Students enter the school with standards which are average. In 2008, the proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics was below average. At Key Stage 3, standards are lower than they were and are significantly lower than expected. Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress and reach average standards. The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory.

The quality of pastoral care and support which students receive is good and it promotes good relationships within the school community and satisfactory personal development and well-being. Vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the extensive support they receive and make satisfactory progress as a result. A carefully planned programme, including individual support, helps students in the school's special unit. Care, guidance and support are only satisfactory overall because systems for tracking students' progress are in place but not fully developed.

The progress of a significant number of students is affected by the inadequate and uneven quality of teaching and learning. This was raised as a key cause for concern by students and some parents during the inspection. The lack of specialist teachers has been a factor in a number of subjects and remains an issue in mathematics. Initiatives have begun to address the inadequate teaching, but there has not yet been enough improvement and weak teaching affects students' progress in mathematics and science particularly. Inconsistencies elsewhere, in the quality of teaching and assessment do not support satisfactory progress. Often, expectations of what students should achieve are low or not shared with them. There is often insufficient planning of work to match the different needs of students within a class. As a result, middle and higher ability students lack challenge in their learning. Assessment of students' learning gives insufficient feedback on what they need to do to improve. This was an area for improvement in the previous inspection and the school has not made enough progress in tackling it. Targets are not used adequately to raise students' expectations of what they can achieve or to give them clear guidance about how they can improve their performance.

Senior leaders are addressing the curriculum issues, identified in the previous inspection, which have contributed to the pupils' underachievement. The current curriculum is satisfactory and now provides vocational courses which match the needs of some learners more closely. However, the school has not given enough attention to the other causes of declining achievement of students at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Senior leadership has not provided a clear and consistent sense of direction through sharply focused roles and responsibilities. The quality of support from senior leaders is variable as is

the contribution of subject and year leaders. There is good practice at both levels, but this is not effectively shared. All in all, leaders and managers at all levels are not demonstrating that they understand or are accountable for students' standards. The monitoring of the school's work at all levels is insufficiently rigorous. This weakness, together with ineffective analysis of performance data means that the school does not have a clear view of itself. Senior staff are having too little impact on addressing the decline in standards and the track record of improvement is limited. The school's capacity to improve is inadequate.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form provision is satisfactory. Standards have been at the national average for a period of years. Achievement has also been satisfactory since the previous inspection. In some Advanced level 2 subjects, achievement has been good. Particularly low results in art and psychology and some Advanced Subsidiary courses caused a dip in achievement in 2008. Effective action has been taken and records on students' current performance show that achievement is now satisfactory, although there are still students underachieving in psychology.

Sixth formers are engaging members of the school community who contribute actively through leadership of the house system and peer mentoring. They enjoy their lessons and respond well to opportunities for collaborative and independent work. They appreciate the availability of teaching staff for mentoring and guidance. Most students know their targets although some are not clear enough about exactly what they have to do to be successful in their subjects. Recently, recruitment to the vocational element of the curriculum has strengthened, helped by links with local institutions. Students benefit from the enrichment opportunities which the curriculum offers including stage design, cookery and politics, as well as work experience. Improvements in how well some students are progressing indicate that the curriculum now better matches their needs. Through these developments, and their positive impact on students' achievement, those leading the sixth form demonstrate their satisfactory capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate students' progress and raise the standards they attain by:
- Ensuring that teaching is closely matched to all students' needs and challenges the average and more able students fully.
- Using targets to raise students' expectations of what they can achieve and giving them clear guidance about how to improve their performance.
- Clarifying the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders and ensuring that they understand and are held accountable for students' standards.
- Rigorously evaluating the impact of teaching on students' progress and taking swift action for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

In 2008 Year 11 students' inadequate progress from their starting points in Year 7 resulted in below average standards in GCSE examinations. Standards fell in the three core subjects and there was considerable variation across GCSE subjects. In a significant number of examination courses, students' progress was below expectation although students made satisfactory progress in music, religious education and geography. Over the last term, the school has put strategies

in place aimed at closing the gap between the standards students should reach and those that they are currently on course to attain at GCSE. This is beginning to have an impact and achievement is starting to improve but there is still much more to be done to ensure that students' achievement is satisfactory.

Standards at Key Stage 3 have also fallen since the previous inspection. Even though the 2008 results were better than those of 2007, students' progress from their starting points in Year 7 was inadequate. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Key Stages 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress including those in the school's special unit. They benefit from the additional support which they receive from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory, including students' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural matters. Participation in sporting opportunities keeps students fit and they respond positively to the school's promotion of healthy eating. Students report little bullying and know what to do if it happens. They say they enjoy school, particularly practical and vocational lessons where teaching often meets their needs more effectively. Behaviour is satisfactory in and around the school. However, there is sometimes some low level disruption in lessons when work is dull. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory but the school recognises that Year 11 students' attendance requires close monitoring. Many students do not understand how to help themselves to improve their work and do not develop sufficient independence to do so. This diminishes students' competence in key skills for working life. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school community, and take part in fund raising, donating significant amounts of money to charities of their choice.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching is too inconsistent and is inadequate overall. There is a significant amount of inadequate teaching across and within departments which is failing to give students the support they need to make satisfactory progress. This is particularly apparent in students' recorded work. Students' books show that the school's assessment policy is not being implemented consistently. Feedback through marking frequently fails to provide information for students about how to improve work. Teachers' expectations of the standards that average and more able students are capable of attaining are too low and this means that these students do not make the progress they should. Teaching is not adequately matched to the range of students' needs.

Although teaching is inadequate overall, there is also satisfactory and even good practice in some lessons. Students make good progress in their learning in lessons where teachers encourage collaboration and there are opportunities for active involvement. In these lessons, students are encouraged to work independently and teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are high. The steps to success are clearly shared with students and planning of the lesson takes account of the range of abilities within the group. Elsewhere, teachers spend too much time talking. Students are passive learners, mostly working from textbooks and worksheets or copying notes, which is a further reason why their progress is slow.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school curriculum has an increasing range of vocational options available. This is helping it to meet some students' needs better, for example through the wider range of courses now available to Year 10 students compared with a year ago. A good example of this is the Year 10 programme designed for less able learners. The combination of off-site and school-based provision is helping to improve these students' attitudes to learning. Personal, social and health education makes a satisfactory contribution to students' personal development and well-being. A new enrichment programme is in place for all Key Stage 3 students to support the development of personal and thinking skills. All students benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities including sports activities, study support, music and residential visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care, particularly for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Effective support from staff in the unit for students with autism and moderate learning difficulties enables them to integrate with others in classes and make satisfactory progress. Students at risk of exclusion, or returning to school after absences are similarly well supported, reducing the likelihood that they will miss learning opportunities. Tutors and pastoral staff liaise effectively between school and home and between subject staff and students where necessary and this supports the smooth progress of students with learning difficulties in particular. There are sound links with external agencies to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Academic guidance is less effective than the school's care and pastoral support. The school has implemented a system to set targets for all students and is developing procedures to track progress towards these targets. However, these systems were affected by a lengthy period of administrative difficulties last year. Over the last term, targets have begun to be more effectively shared between tutors and students and their parents, but there are inconsistencies in the way these are used by subject teachers. Targets, when set, often lack challenge and too frequently do not make reference to the steps students need to take to achieve success.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Sound systems are in place to ensure that students are safe and protected. The headteacher and governors have worked effectively to reduce a sizeable budget deficit over the last three years and have improved aspects of the school's facilities and accommodation. However, leaders at all levels, including governors, do not systematically monitor the school's work. Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses, including the effectiveness of teaching, is inconsistent and in some cases ill-informed. Analysis of examination results is carried out soundly in some departments but inadequately in others. As a result of this inconsistency senior leaders do not make accurate evaluations of students' achievements or analyse trends. At whole-school level, data are not used effectively to track the performance of different groups of students. As a result, leaders do not securely understand students' standards and are not taking responsibility for them.

The roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders are not clearly defined. Some senior leaders give stronger and more frequent support to departmental leaders than others resulting in variability in the evaluation and planning of the departments. When weaknesses in departments are identified, there is frequently an inadequate follow-up review to check whether improvements are being made. The school's recent successful bid for designation as a sports college has included analysis of the needs of the local community and the school has responded to this through its sports provision. Satisfactory links are forged with the local community as well as a link with a school in Tanzania, showing adequate promotion of community cohesion. Links with wider communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom are developing but are not yet as well developed.

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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?	4	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3	

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
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	3	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	4	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 January 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Dyson Perrins Church of England Sports College, Malvern, WR14 1WD

Thank you for making us welcome and for contributing so helpfully to the inspection of your school. We listened to your views with interest and were impressed by the thoughtfulness of your comments.

We found that you get on well with each other and with your teachers. You told us how much you appreciate the opportunities teachers give you to take part in a wide range of activities. Many of you are enjoying the new vocational opportunities which are available to you in the curriculum. You are also very pleased with the developments which are starting to emerge as a sports college. Despite this, much improvement is needed in the school. The sixth form helps you to make satisfactory progress, but you are not always supported in other areas of the school to achieve as well as you can and this means that recent results have not been good enough.

In some lessons, teachers assess your work regularly and give you clear feedback on the steps you need to take to improve. This should happen in all lessons to help you to make progress. In some lessons, the work you are given matches your ability closely and it challenges you to think and work independently. In other lessons, you find the work boring because it is repetitive or too easy. We have asked staff to plan work which challenges you to think so that you can make better progress. We have also asked your headteacher and other senior staff to check carefully on what is happening in classes to make sure that the quality of your experiences are more even across the school. Linked to this, we have told the school that the roles and responsibilities of all leaders and managers need to be clearer. All of this action is necessary to ensure that you make satisfactory progress and are helped to reach higher standards.

We believe you will want to play your part in helping the school to improve by using your energy and talents to work hard and to do your best. We wish all of you good luck for the future. Other inspectors will visit the school to check on its progress.

Yours faithfully

Ruth Westbrook

Lead inspector.