

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103494
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336094
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	594
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	9
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alastair Rae
Headteacher	Lesley Brooman
Date of previous school inspection	4 January 2007
School address	Woodbrooke Road Bournville Birmingham
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors, one of whom focused for half a day on the school's provision for safeguarding pupils. The inspectors spent 13 hours looking at learning, observed 28 lessons, saw 27 teachers teaching and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including development plans, school and national data and the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Responses to questionnaires from 44 parents, 66 members of staff and 88 pupils also provided additional evidence for inspectors.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and their learning and progress, particularly at Key Stage 4
- the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' achievement
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in sustaining improvement
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school which became a Foundation school in April 2008. There are more boys than girls in the school. It serves pupils from a much wider area than its immediate locality, including pupils who join its special education resource base for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and speech and communication difficulties. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is high compared to national figures. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around 72% of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, the remainder representing a variety of different heritages. Pupils of mixed heritage form the largest single group. The school is part of the Oaks Sixth Form College, a collaborative post-16 provision in place since September 2006. The school was redesignated as a specialist technology college in September 2005.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This satisfactory school is rapidly improving because of senior leaders' drive and determination. Although standards attained at GCSE are low, there is a strong, rising trend. In 2009, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more good passes at GCSE rose significantly. The proportion including English and mathematics among these passes is rising at a faster rate than seen nationally because senior leaders have used suitable intervention strategies to make a real difference to pupils' learning and progress. Consequently, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving securely and quickly. The school is now making great strides as a specialist technology college, although it did not meet its specialist attainment targets in 2009. Current tracking data shows that good progress is being made in mathematics, science, and design and technology. Challenging targets have been set for 2010 and senior leaders are confident that they will be met in the light of current gains.

A good curriculum is effective in meeting pupils' needs and aspirations. Adjustments to the curriculum, including in the sixth form, have maximised pupils' opportunities to gain relevant qualifications and increased their enjoyment and motivation. Good engagement with parents and the forging of partnerships through the school's specialist status are closely linked to an effective curriculum, rising standards and pupils' good personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils form good relationships with each other and adults so that they feel safe and cared for. Almost all pupils say they have someone to turn to if they have a problem, and that incidents of bullying and racial intolerance are rare and are always dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and appreciate the importance of respecting the diversity of beliefs and values found in the school and beyond. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and this is reflected in the low levels of exclusions. Pupils respond well to integrated approaches to improving attendance and the rate of persistent absence has reduced very significantly so that attendance is now average.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and none is inadequate. Although there is much good teaching across the school, including the quality of marking which helps pupils to improve their work, it is inconsistent. This results in satisfactory rather than good progress in those lessons which lack enough challenge. The quality of pupils' care, guidance and support is good. The school's very inclusive approach is a strength and one of the reasons for its popularity.

The school is well led by a headteacher committed to raising standards while ensuring that pupils develop as caring, well-rounded citizens. The headteacher is supported well by other staff with management responsibilities, who play a significant part in sustaining

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school improvement. The use of assessment to set targets and track pupil progress against them has made a good impact on raising standards. However, there are some inconsistencies in the use of assessment to match work to pupils' different abilities. Leaders, including middle managers, are not complacent and recognise that the year-on-year gains in the proportion achieving five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics needs to be accelerated by securing further consistency in teaching. There is a strong track record in gaining and sustaining improvement in challenging circumstances, including dealing decisively with weaknesses in the sixth form identified in the last inspection. The school's capacity for sustaining improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics by ensuring that more of the teaching is good or better through:
 - providing greater consistency in the teachers' use of assessment information to plan challenging tasks and activities which are better suited to pupils' different abilities.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Overall results in GCSE examinations are low, but are rising rapidly and significantly. The proportion of students who gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has been significantly below average over the last three years. However, there are clear signs of an upward trend over the same period, particularly in mathematics. Pupils' progress has been satisfactory over the last few years but a greater emphasis on increasing the pace of learning and an effective tracking system has led to the rate of progress improving securely and quickly. This is also the case in science, and design and technology, which are the school's specialist subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. This is because there is good and efficient identification of these pupils' needs and their progress is monitored effectively and rigorously.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils of all ages and different backgrounds mix well together and feel safe. They have a clear sense of what is right and wrong and play their part in recognising risks and minimising them. They understand how to adopt healthy lifestyles and enthusiastically take part in the wide range of physical activities that are on offer. A significant proportion of pupils opt to eat a healthy meal at lunchtime. They cooperate well in groups and teams and enjoy showing leadership and responsibility. Their good contribution to the school and the wider community is shown, for example, through their participation in the work of the

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school council. The recently established 'pupil progress panels' enable pupils to express their views about the quality of provision, including their progress in learning. Pupils also play an effective part in the school's links with primary schools through the school's specialist subjects. A well-established project on sustainability has successfully enabled pupils to develop collaboration and friendships with pupils in schools across Europe. Pupils are prepared well for the next phase of their lives because they develop their oracy, literacy, numeracy and technology skills in a wide range of areas. The school's specialism makes an important contribution in this regard. For example, pupils are involved in 'mega engineering' days which also contribute to the development of pupils' enterprise capabilities. A concerted effort to improve attendance levels enables pupils to appreciate the link between attendance and attainment. Pupils' punctuality is good and attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school has successfully integrated a significant proportion of new teachers into its staff. Leaders and managers have ensured professional development is at the forefront

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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of school planning and development. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving strongly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in the areas they teach. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of pupils' response and behaviour. This ensures lessons run smoothly. Teachers have good information from assessments about the prior attainment and skills of the pupils in their classes. However, the use of this information when planning lessons is inconsistent. Many teachers ensure that work is planned to match the needs and interests of the pupils, ensuring good levels of support combined with challenge. In a number of lessons observed, however, the same work is planned for all pupils. Higher attaining pupils have to work through easier tasks before they come to work which really makes them think. Pupils who find learning more difficult are unsure what to do. This slows the pace of learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and supports pupils' personal and academic skills well. It is innovative in providing a good range of options for pupils of all levels of ability. Literacy and numeracy are rightly prioritised and opportunities for pupils to develop their vocabulary and literacy skills are a regular feature of lessons in all subjects. The school's specialist subjects are planned imaginatively, taking good account of pupils' interests and aspirations. A number of popular extra-curricular clubs, including sports, study support and aero kick, enrich provision and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and well-being. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well managed and enables these pupils to take a full part in all activities. There is good support for pupils who find learning more difficult through reading programmes and other additional support. The school works closely with local primary schools to help pupils joining the school in Year 7 to settle quickly. Effective support continues to enable pupils to make the most suitable choices after Year 11 and when they leave the sixth form. Pupils and parents particularly value the 'every child matters centre' which is very well managed by a caring and able team of staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Members of the leadership team are fully committed to improving the quality of education and their work has resulted in measurable, effective success. This is because staff are all pulling in the same direction to raise standards and to sustain pupils' good well-being which was reported in the last inspection. Rigorous self-evaluation systems

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identify strengths and weaknesses accurately and lead to the setting of challenging targets for pupils. The school's leaders observe teachers' work regularly, and give good opportunities for less experienced staff to learn from others. This helps to explain the improvements in standards. Leaders are effective in ensuring that barriers to learning are removed in a school which faces many challenges, including high levels of social disadvantage. There is an active promotion of equality of opportunity which ensures that there are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic or mixed heritages. Harmony between different groups of learners is sought strenuously and achieved. Good community cohesion extends beyond school and the local community through effective partnerships, for example as shown in the project on 'connecting classrooms' with a cluster of schools in Ghana and South Africa. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements and there are effective systems in place to ensure the safety of pupils. Governance is good. The governing body is well informed and is well placed to drive improvement and challenge performance. Careful use is made of resources and the pupils' outcomes indicate satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students opting for a sixth form course at Dame Elizabeth Cadbury do so because they are drawn to its particular benefits. They value the continuity with staff and the relatively small numbers mean that students enjoy much individual attention during lessons and generous guided study time beyond. Examination results are broadly

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average at the end of Year 13. Provision is good, demonstrating senior leaders' determination to deal with weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Good leadership and management ensure that the drive to improve students' current satisfactory and improving progress is capitalised further. As a result, the school is pursuing ambitious plans to secure more profitable and relevant provision, better suited to students' needs and aspirations. Attendance levels are consistently high as are retention rates. This reflects the school's valuable contribution to the Oaks College Collaborative. In 2009, almost all students continued to further or higher education. Tracking procedures are systematic and coherent and students benefit from clear guidance on how they can improve their work. Parents are kept well informed of students' progress. Students are keen to contribute to the school, for example through mentoring and act as good role models for younger pupils. Students also commit themselves successfully to leading charity events in school and enjoy being involved in the local Envision sustainability project.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Of these, most view the school as doing a good job overall. As one parent put it, 'Staff have always taken the time to deal with any issues and have responded promptly in a fair manner.' A very small minority of parents responded negatively to some aspects of the school's provision, feeling particularly that not all of the teaching is good and that children's particularly needs are not always met. Inspectors considered these issues and concluded that, on balance, the school is effective in meeting pupils' specific needs. The inspection has also identified inconsistencies in teaching, as well as the strengths which account for the rise in standards of attainment gained so far.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 594 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	27	29	66	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	30	28	64	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	48	22	50	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	30	24	55	4	9	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	10	23	26	59	4	9	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	27	27	61	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	20	30	68	3	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	27	28	64	2	5	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	32	22	50	5	11	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	30	27	61	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	20	29	66	4	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	30	28	64	3	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	34	24	55	4	9	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dame Elizabeth Cadbury Technology College, Bournville, B30 1UL

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. Your warmth made up for the cold and snowy conditions! After looking at the school's work and the questionnaires completed by some of you and your parents we reached conclusions which I would like to share with you.

Yours is a satisfactory school which is improving quickly, including the sixth form. The headteacher, senior staff and governors are good in ensuring that all staff share the common purpose of raising standards and improving your learning further. Their drive for improvement is seen in the most recent GCSE results which remain below average, but show a trend of improvement which is faster than the national rate. Your achievement is satisfactory and learning in lessons is at least satisfactory and increasingly better. This also reflects a good curriculum which is better suited to your needs and aspirations.

Staff take good care of you and you told us that you feel safe. The majority of you eat healthily and take part in activities which you enjoy. We are pleased to report your good links with pupils in some European schools through the project on sustainability. You have very positive attitudes to learning and behaviour in classes and around the school are good. So too are the relationships between the different groups in the school. A lot of effort has gone into ensuring that you understand the consequences of missing school and the impact this has on your learning. Attendance is average and persistent absence has improved dramatically from 2008. You can play your part in ensuring that this improvement is maintained.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but we also observed good teaching. We have asked senior leaders to ensure that there is greater consistency in the use teachers make of your assessment information so that the work given for you is better suited to your abilities and stretches your thinking and skills further. You can play a part in this by rising to the challenge provided by teachers.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector

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