

# Smith's Wood Sports College

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104118
<b>Local Authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	336238
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Sims HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1110
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	85
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hugh Hendry
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Hawkins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Windward Way Smith's Wood Birmingham
<b>Telephone number</b>	01217884100
<b>Fax number</b>	01217884101
<b>Email address</b>	office@smiths-wood.solihull.sch.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the college's work, and looked at its priorities, analysed recent examination results, scrutinised child protection and safeguarding documents, read 74 parental questionnaires and studied staff and student surveys.

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

- the achievement of students in mathematics from Key Stages 2 to 4
- the accuracy of target setting
- the quality of provision and support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities the capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to secure improvements
- the consistency of teaching.

## Information about the school

Smith's Wood is larger than the average-sized secondary school. It is situated to the north of Solihull. Most students in the college are of White British background. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements, is above the national average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. The school has specialist status as a sports college. The college moved into a new building in September 2009.

**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

The college provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. It has a good capacity to make further improvements because of the relentless drive of the principal and senior leadership team and its track record of improving the quality of the leadership, management and teaching in the college.

The college has successfully raised the proportion of students who have gained five or more good passes at GCSE to above the national average. Attainment is significantly below the national average because results at GCSE in mathematics are still too low, although they are improving rapidly through changes in leadership and staffing.

The learning and progress of students is good overall, with the exception of mathematics where it is satisfactory. This has been achieved by a strong focus on improving the quality and consistency of teaching. Senior and middle leaders monitor teaching rigorously and have a very accurate knowledge of strengths and areas for development. Improvements have been secured through intensive support and training and strategic new appointments in leadership. Students know how well they are doing and are clear about their future targets. The college sets challenging targets for students to achieve.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress as their individual education plans are not consistently specific enough. Students behave well and have positive attitudes towards others. Their behaviour in lessons and around the building is good. Their experience of different communities in the United Kingdom is limited.

Students benefit from a good curriculum where there is a suitable mix of vocational and academic courses. Students have a variety of curriculum pathways suited to their individual needs. Care, guidance and support are good. Students and parents are overwhelmingly positive about how well they are looked after. The college puts a high emphasis on ensuring that students are kept safe.

The sports specialism makes a significant contribution to the college and the local community in the range of sporting opportunities available and additional vocational courses accessible to students. The sixth form is still at a very embryonic stage, having opened in September 2009. Students have engaged in courses with enthusiasm and are enjoying the brand new facilities. Vocational courses are more developed than academic courses but overall effectiveness at this early stage is satisfactory.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

**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

- Raise attainment further in mathematics at GCSE by ensuring that teaching is consistently good.
  - Ensure that regular monitoring of the individual education plans of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities leads to appropriate support and intervention to meet their needs consistently well.
  - Increase students' awareness of cultural diversity by promoting greater opportunities for them to engage with different communities locally and nationally.
- 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**

From a very low start when they first join the college, students make good progress in their learning so that a higher proportion than nationally achieve five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C. Standards remain very low in mathematics although results improved in the most recent examination, and indicative targets and early module results show this improvement is set to continue. Students made good progress in their learning in lessons seen by inspectors, particularly in English and science where they do well. Progress is satisfactory in mathematics. Good results in vocational courses make a significant contribution to students' achievement and the sports facilities offered through the school's specialism add to their enjoyment of learning. The small number of minority ethnic students do as well as other students in the college.

Students say overwhelmingly that they feel safe in college. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe. A very large majority are self-disciplined and behave well, both in lessons and around the college. Most take regular exercise and make full use of the college's excellent sporting facilities. Older students support younger ones well, with some acting as mentors. Attendance is in line with the national average. Students' achievement in basic skills provides them with a satisfactory preparation for further study and the world of work. Students respect others' needs and interests and have a good sense of common values.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**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

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching provides a challenge for students of all abilities. Lessons are planned to include a variety of activities to engage students in their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Assessment is used well to inform students how well they have done and what their future targets are. Students are not always clear exactly how they will get there.

The curriculum is suitably tailored to meet individual needs through a variety of courses that are relevant to different interests and abilities. Higher attaining students can take GCSE examinations early and now the sixth form has been established, there is flexibility for them to take AS courses earlier. No students have the opportunity to take a second language at Key Stage 3 although uptake in modern foreign languages is high at GCSE because of the good provision in the subject. The school's specialist status has led to the availability of a wider range of vocational courses.

Arrangements for transition from primary to secondary school are good with mentoring projects for Year 7 and 8 students to link with pupils in Year 6. Cross-curricular days introduce students to the world of work. Students are guided well in planning their next steps moving into the sixth form. There is a range of strategies in place to monitor and promote attendance which has resulted in improvements. Learning plans for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not consistently have measurable outcomes.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

**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

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior leadership team consistently takes the lead in galvanizing the enthusiasm of the staff. Central to this is the vision and unremitting philosophy of the principal to raise standards. He is strongly supported by governors, who are determined to challenge the college to tackle weaknesses and bring about improvements. There are positive relationships between the college and parents and carers whose views are sought to inform decisions made. The college has developed a range of partnerships to contribute to the achievement and well-being of students. The college effectively promotes equality and tackles discrimination by monitoring closely how well individuals and groups are doing in their work. There is a strong focus on meeting the needs of minority groups by ensuring they are fully included in every aspect of the life of the school.

Community cohesion is actively promoted within the local community. Although a survey has been taken within the curriculum, there is no structured leadership in place to ensure it is more fully developed. The college is dedicated and creative in its approach to working with key agencies to reduce the risk to students. All safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and in line with legal guidance. There is an insufficiently clear overview of how frequently policies are reviewed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

**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

**The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money**

**3**

## Sixth form

The college's inclusive approach to admitting students to the new sixth form means that attainment on entry is below average. Students are keen to do well and have applied themselves to their learning with diligence and enthusiasm. They take opportunities to serve the community in local schools and support younger learners through vertical tutor groups. They are making satisfactory progress in lessons.

The vocational courses are well established and teachers are treating sixth formers as mature adults and giving them opportunities to work independently. This is less well established in academic courses, where at times teaching is too prescriptive and students are not given as much opportunity to take responsibility for their learning. Tutors know their students well and effective support is provided through mentoring.

*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

3

Leadership and management of the sixth form

3

## Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents and carers responded to the parental questionnaire, having completed a parental survey for the college very recently. Of those who responded, almost all said they were happy with their child's experience at college. All of them said that the college kept their child safe in college. Almost all said that they were kept informed about their child's progress and that the college meets their children's needs well. Very few parents said their children did not make sufficient progress or that the college was not well led or managed.

A very small minority of parents said the college did not help them to support their children's learning and a similar proportion said their children did not enjoy college and that the college did not deal with behaviour effectively but inspectors did not see any evidence of this.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Smith's Wood Sports 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1110 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	35	44	59	3	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	30	41	44	59	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	41	43	58	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	46	39	53	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	30	49	66	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	27	46	62	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	20	54	73	2	3	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)	22	30	49	66	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	32	48	65	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	38	42	57	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	16	57	77	2	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	35	47	37	50	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	46	39	53	0	0	1	1

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



4 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Smith's Wood Sports College, Birmingham B36 0UE

You will know that we recently came to inspect your college and I thought you would want to know what we have said in our report.

Smith's Wood is providing a satisfactory standard of education and is improving. Led by your highly focussed principal and senior staff, teaching has improved and is good. You have a rich and varied range of courses that meet your different needs and interests. The new building gives you a fantastic environment to work in and your sporting facilities are second to none. You now have the opportunity to take courses in the newly established sixth form. You are overwhelmingly positive about the way the college keeps you safe. Your behaviour in and around the college is good and most of you are enthusiastic about your learning.

Your overall achievement is satisfactory. The proportion of you who go on to achieve five good grades at GCSE is now above the national average although not enough of you achieve at least a grade C in mathematics. Overall, you make good progress in your learning but the support plans for those of you who find learning difficult are not always specific enough. You get on well with each other and respect each others' differences well but have had limited opportunities to experience the diversity of communities in the UK.

We have asked the college to raise standards further by making sure your mathematics lessons are consistently good, learning plans for students who receive extra support are clearer and opportunities for you to experience different communities in Britain are extended.

We enjoyed meeting you and talking to some of you. Thank you for telling us what you think about the college. I would like to wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims

Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**