

# The William Allitt School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112938
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338056
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Jones

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	945
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Mead
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Crossley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Sunnyside Newhall Swadlincote
<b>Telephone number</b>	01283 216404
<b>Fax number</b>	01283 552932
<b>Email address</b>	info@williamallitt.derbyshire.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 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 33 lessons and observed 31 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and students. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, key policy documents, assessment information, minutes of meetings held by the governing body and students' books. Safeguarding procedures were also checked. They also took account of questionnaires from 385 parents and carers, 141 students and 48 members of staff.

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

- current and past progress made by students
- the extent to which teaching and the use of assessment challenges and motivates students
- the effectiveness of the curriculum and care, guidance and support in promoting personal development and achievement
- the effectiveness of partnerships with other schools.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized secondary school, which became a specialist arts college in 2005 and gained high performance specialism status in April 2008, offering science as a second specialism. There is an average proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The school is funded to provide additional support to a number of pupils with significant learning or physical disabilities. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups those who speak English as an additional language. Almost all students are White British. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. In 2009, the school renewed its Artsmark (Silver) and Sportsmark awards. In addition, the school has gained the Schools Curriculum Award for its work in developing links with the wider community and holds an International School award.

**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**

**3**

### Main findings

This is a popular and improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its students. The strength of the school lies in the pastoral support for students, who enjoy school life and appreciate the strong investment of the headteacher and all the staff in ensuring students are cared for well. As a result, the school is a nurturing environment where the contribution made by students to the school and wider community is outstanding and relationships are positive. Students respond positively to the effective support and guidance offered: attendance has remained above average for several years and is improving as a result of the implementation of sustained efforts and strategies; behaviour is good, and there have been no permanent and very few fixed term exclusions in the last year.

This year has seen some improvement in students' achievement after a decline following the previous inspection. While remaining average, levels of attainment are also beginning to rise this year. Developments to the system used to track students' progress over time have enabled senior leaders to target strategies and begin to tackle areas of underachievement. As a result, gaps in students' learning are closing and all students make at least satisfactory progress relative to their starting points, with an increasing number making good progress.

Central to the school's plans for improvement has been the provision of a more appropriate curriculum to meet the range of students' needs. The school has made considerable progress in implementing good curriculum plans including developing some strong partnerships to provide further vocational enrichment. The school's designation as an arts college has made a significant contribution to these developments, including the promotion of a cohesive community with good links to other communities in the local area. There are significant opportunities for students to gain an understanding of diverse communities beyond the school and its immediate locality, and there are secure international partnerships forged, which recently included a visit to Japan.

Improving the quality of teaching and learning has become a focus in the school's drive to raise attainment and achievement this year. The quality is beginning to improve as a result of monitoring by senior leaders supported by a programme of professional development; despite this, inconsistencies remain. An increasing proportion of teaching is good or better across the school but its overall quality is satisfactory. This is because teaching and the use of assessment are not yet consistently good enough to enable students to make good progress in their learning or to plan tasks that are well matched to students' abilities. Students say that they enjoy their lessons more when they are actively engaged in their learning. There are not enough opportunities in lessons to ensure that students are actively involved in their learning.

**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

Following the decline in the rate of progress in 2008, governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders have recognised the barriers to progress and have taken action to bring about improvement. They are developing staff teams who are committed to raising standards and who have a clear understanding about what is required to be successful. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and leaders at all levels contribute to the school's self-review process. However, monitoring systems have lacked rigour and have not been quick enough in the past to support effective strategies to improve the quality of learning. Nevertheless, the improvements made this year in improving provision and outcomes for students demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

- By July 2011, ensure that the majority of students make good progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching to 75%
  - increasing opportunities for students to actively participate in learning
  - ensuring teaching regularly refers to assessment information to accurately match work to the needs and aspirations of students
  - providing opportunities for teaching staff to share the good and outstanding practice that exists within the school
- Sharpen the monitoring of teaching and learning and use the information gleaned to further improve provision
- 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**

Students enter the school with average standards. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11, their attainment is in line with expectations, indicating satisfactory progress. In 2009, the number of students reaching five or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C, including English and mathematics was 54% which is a little above the national average of 50%. There is variation in the attainment of students in different subjects in GCSE examinations. In science, drama, physical education and English, students reached standards which were above average. In music, modern foreign languages and business studies they were below average. In mathematics standards have dipped to an average level. This year, in most subjects, standards are predicted to be at least average. All students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. However, on occasions, the tasks set for some of these students are not sufficiently matched to their needs in lessons.

The quality of students' learning in lessons is satisfactory overall. However, the quality of teaching is uneven. When actively involved in their work, students show high levels of interest and enthusiasm and make good progress. This is generally the case in the

**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

specialist subjects where students have a good mix of independent and collaborative study. In a Year 7 religious education lesson, for example, students' learning about Sikhism was outstanding because they had the opportunity to work collaboratively and to show initiative through independent learning. In many lessons, students do not have enough opportunities to interact with each other in discussion and group work. There are also insufficient opportunities for students to engage in independent learning and exercise initiative.

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strengthens students' good behaviour in lessons and around school. They are friendly, welcoming and polite to visitors. Students value highly the school and wider community and enthusiastically take on leadership roles to support the smooth running of the school and benefit the local community. These include a wide range of charity fund-raising and the staging community arts events. Students have a strong and clear involvement in school decisions; for example, the very active school council regularly takes part in decisions that contribute to improvements to students' well-being. The school's specialisms provide support for its engagement with the local community. Many students adopt healthy lifestyles, taking part in regular exercise both in and outside of school. They understand how to keep healthy and safe. They say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
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
<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>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2

<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>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>
--	----------

## How effective is the provision?

Examples of good practice include positive relationships with students, secure subject knowledge of staff, probing questioning and helpful ongoing feedback. However, this picture is not consistent across lessons. Where teaching is effective, teachers meet the needs of all students because assessment information is used carefully to plan tasks which are well-matched to their abilities and enable them to make good progress. Where it is less effective, teachers often dominate discussions and assessment information is not used consistently to plan for the full range of abilities and needs in the class. Therefore, the pace of learning slows because there is an insufficient level of challenge. The system used to set targets for students and give them regular feedback on their progress towards them is improving, although practice is inconsistent across the school.

The curriculum provides well-organised and effective opportunities for learning. The development of specialist days supports personal and health education and contributes significantly to students' enjoyment of school. The 'Opening Minds' curriculum in Year 7 is effective in emphasising important links between different subjects. It also enables students and teachers to get to know each other quickly and so effectively supports transition from primary school. Through the specialist subjects, students develop confidence and interpersonal skills, which in turn help them to develop a good understanding of the world of work and prepare them well for future choices and pathways. The school has a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended.

Partnerships with external agencies are effective, for example in supporting those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good strategies to promote attendance and reduce the small number of students with persistently high absence have resulted in continuing improvement to the levels of both. The school provides helpful and clear advice on future options beyond Year 11.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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?

While there are some good features of leadership and management, inconsistencies,

**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

such as the leadership and management of teaching and learning make its overall quality satisfactory. Senior leaders are increasingly aware of the issues the school faces and are confident to try new ideas to improve provision. For example, the introduction of the new curriculum in Year 7 last year has brought improvements to achievement. School leaders effectively promote community cohesion, and there are secure plans to further promote engagement with a range of groups beyond the school and the local community. Safeguarding procedures are good. Policies and procedures are securely in place and record keeping is robust. Risk assessments and health and safety checks are regularly carried out.

Middle leaders are developing their ability to make judgements about the effectiveness of their subject areas. In the past this has been hampered by programmes of monitoring, which, although extensive, have lacked the rigour to challenge teachers and hold them to account for the progress of their students. There is some variation in the quality of data analysis and its use to effect the necessary improvement. The governing body is committed to the school and discharges its statutory responsibilities appropriately. All leaders and managers are committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. For example, everyone who wants to take part in the wide range of regular sporting and arts events can do so because no one is excluded.

Partnerships are another strong feature of the school. Many links are made with local schools and Burton College that improve students' experiences and life chances. There are good examples of the extent to which the school knows its students and local community. The school is well regarded by parents and carers and is over-subscribed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</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

## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers are very positive in their support for the school. A very small minority felt that the school could do more to support healthy lifestyles and deal more effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors felt that the support and guidance being given in these areas were good. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the good systems of communication that exist and confident that their children are well looked after. Inspectors also agree with these positive views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at William Allitt School 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 385 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 945 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	136	35	227	59	10	3	8	2
The school keeps my child safe	140	36	227	59	11	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	228	59	148	38	5	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	198	51	164	43	14	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	166	43	207	54	3	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	114	30	235	61	22	6	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	19	257	67	42	11	1	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)	129	34	220	57	9	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	131	34	228	59	16	4	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	135	35	201	52	30	8	5	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	90	23	244	63	23	6	5	1
The school is led and managed effectively	173	45	190	49	11	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	200	52	163	42	13	3	1	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.**



21 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The William Allitt School, Swadlincote, DE11 0TL

Thank you for the help you provided when the inspectors visited your school recently. We were impressed with your politeness and your comments were very helpful to us. The quality of education provided throughout the school is satisfactory and improving. You make satisfactory progress in your learning, reaching average standards by the time you leave school. You make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community - well done! Your attendance is good. You understand how to lead healthy lifestyles and you tell us you feel safe in school and that there are people to help you if needed. You make full use of the opportunities which being an arts college bring, and this has a good effect on your personal development. Many of you do things for others, both in school and the local area. We were impressed with the way you organise events yourselves, for others to enjoy, such as the annual whole school show. We especially enjoyed the delicious food you prepared following your visit to the Gurdwara. Your headteacher and his staff look after you well and give you appropriate support and help at different stages of your school life. All of these things are helping to prepare you well for the time when you leave.

You told us how you enjoy lessons when there are activities which challenge you and make you think. We saw how the quality of your work increased when this was the case. You make good progress when there is a careful match between your ability level and the work you are asked to do. We have asked your teachers to make sure that your work includes enough challenge and support depending on your needs. We have also asked them to share their best ideas to help you improve. Finally, we have asked leaders and managers to look very closely at how well you are doing and to use this information to help you to progress even more quickly.

We hope that you will continue to help the school improve even further by striving to do your very best in your work and helping the staff put these improvements in place.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead 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).**