

# Tewkesbury School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115756
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	338657
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Harrett

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	1703
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	378
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Clive Ainsworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Reilly
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Ashchurch Road Tewkesbury GL20 8DF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01684 292152
<b>Fax number</b>	01684 850742
<b>Email address</b>	office@tewkesburyschool.org

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 59 lessons taught by 55 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, the Vice Chair of the Governing Body and with teachers and school leaders. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at development plans, reports from the School Improvement Partner, minutes of meetings of the governing body, self-evaluation documents and monitoring information. They also analysed the responses of questionnaires received from students, staff and 420 parents and carers.

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

- the achievement of boys to determine whether teaching, assessment and the curriculum is improving their progress
- progress in English, science and information and communication technology
- the quality of the sixth form
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in the school.

## Information about the school

The school is much larger than average. The majority of students are from White British backgrounds, but the proportion from other backgrounds is rising. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average, as is the proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy School Plus status and has specialist status in technology and modern foreign languages.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

Good leadership and management have further strengthened many aspects of the school since the last inspection. Good care, guidance and support promote the personal development of the students well, enabling them to make the right choices as they progress through the school. The good curriculum offers a broad and flexible choice of subjects and pathways, promoting good engagement and behaviour and above-average attendance. The school works well with partners in further and secondary education to review and improve the curriculum and to support the behaviour and involvement of all students. Students and parents and carers express a high level of confidence in the education provided by the school, but leaders and managers are not complacent; initiatives, such as the appointment of a parent support adviser and a headteacher's forum for parents and carers, ensure that these strengths are broadened and extended well. Governance is good. Provision in the large sixth form is good so that students make good progress. Consequently, students leave school at the end of Year 11 or after the sixth form well equipped for life and the very large majority continue in appropriate education, employment or training.

Since the last inspection achievement has been good in the majority of subjects. However, achievement dipped in important areas, particularly English, science and information and communication technology (ICT), so that some students did not make the progress of which they were capable. Consequently, achievement dropped and became satisfactory overall. A gap in performance between some groups of students was most notable in the lower performance of boys when compared with girls. The school's careful analysis of the causes of these problems has led to improved teaching, a more responsive curriculum and better use of assessment information. Consequently, students are now making better progress in these areas, although this is not so secure in English, and the gaps between different groups are beginning to close. Achievement is good overall. Although teaching and assessment are good, there is some variation in the quality between, and sometimes within, subjects. There are also missed opportunities to promote the acquisition of key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum. The improvements point to the good quality of the leadership and management of teaching and learning. However, the school does not yet spread the existing good and outstanding practice well enough across the school. Senior and middle leaders have not always ensured that the quality of teaching is judged against progress over time and not just in the lessons observed. Nevertheless, considerable improvements and the accurate identification of the main issues in self-evaluation procedures demonstrate the school's good capacity to raise standards further.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to close the gap between the progress made by boys and girls and between achievement in English and other subjects by:
  - ensuring that assessment information about individuals and groups, in English and other subjects, is used to plan learning activities in lessons specifically tailored for students' precise needs
  - identifying the particular features of the most successful teaching in the school and planning ways in which this can be shared with other teachers and subjects so as to reduce the variation in the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that judgements on the quality of teaching in evaluations by senior and middle leaders are linked to the progress of students over time
  - monitoring the quality of marking to ensure that it is regular, concentrates on what has been achieved and gives precise advice on the next steps to be taken to improve the quality of work
  - planning for the inclusion of literacy, numeracy and ICT where appropriate in all subjects across the curriculum in ways which improve these key skills while simultaneously improving subject-specific skills and knowledge.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Attainment on entry is above average, although the profile is dropping slightly over time. By the end of Year 11 students attain standards that are above average overall, with high attainment in areas such as the proportion of those attaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics. In many subjects this represents securely good progress and the inspection noted improvements in the performance of the current Year 11 in areas that were weaker last year, backed up by good progress in other year groups as well. Consequently, variations between subjects and between groups of students are narrowing and achievement is good overall. Students enjoy their learning. They behaved well in the lessons observed, sometimes making exceptional progress in their learning. However, there are occasions where they do not make such good progress because assessment information is not sufficiently taken into account when planning lessons. Good practice in this respect was observed in Year 10 English lessons where the learning activities were clearly based on identified weaknesses in particular aspects of writing, leading to good, focused learning on improving descriptive and persuasive writing. However, lessons do not always take account of the range of ability in the class. Where students are identified with having significant and long-term learning difficulties and/or disabilities, they receive close and well-tailored support from teachers and their assistants. Consequently, their progress is at least as good as that of other students. However, those whose needs are less pronounced are not always so well targeted in lesson planning and learning activities.

Good relationships between staff and students help to ensure that students feel safe

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and secure. They reported that they are well cared for and thought that this was a strength of the school. During the inspection behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. Students were polite and helpful to visitors and treated each other with respect. Some students reported that lessons are sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour; inspection evidence showed that this was infrequent and dealt with effectively where necessary. Students are given opportunities to participate in school life and feel able to initiate their own activities, such as a recent school concert which they set up themselves. Students enthusiastically participate in physical education, drama and dance activities, helping them to develop independence. They know how to eat healthily and are encouraged to do so. Some show their understanding of this by complaining that some of the food in the school canteen is 'bland and expensive', an issue which the school is pursuing. Many students cycle or walk to school. They make good use of the school council and can point to meaningful changes that have been brought about, such as to the uniform and the planned provision for all-weather pitches. School attendance is above average. Students are well prepared for life after school with many opportunities to use important skills in a variety of situations, though opportunities within subjects to develop literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not always taken up. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflected in their sensitive response to issues such as the plight of child soldiers in other parts of the world. However, their understanding of the diversity of different cultures within the United Kingdom is not as strong.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	2
<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>2</b>

<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.

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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and forge good relationships with students, who are consequently cooperative and engaged in their learning. In the best practice, teaching ensures that lessons have a high degree of challenge and that expectations are high. Teachers help students to overcome difficulties rather than glossing over them or doing too much to solve them, so that students have a real sense of achievement and confidence in the skills that they have acquired. Such lessons have a clarity of purpose, guided by precise learning outcomes, probing questioning, and frequent pauses for reflection and reshaping of the lesson to ensure that all are 'on task' and making progress. For example, this was particularly evident in a science lesson in which students were well aware of the intended outcomes for them personally and in some science and mathematics lessons in which teachers regularly checked the progress of the students and adjusted the activities accordingly. In some lessons this high standard was not always sustained. Sometimes teachers spent too long explaining activities. The purpose of lessons was not always entirely clear to the students and planning was more concerned with what would happen rather than what would be learned as a consequence of the activities. There was sometimes insufficient challenge for students. Some excellent examples of assessment information being used in lessons and in marking were observed, leading to students becoming completely absorbed in challenging work. However, the quality of oral and written feedback is variable across the school and not always used to good effect by all teachers.

Developments to the already strong curriculum have done much to foster students' involvement and motivation. There is a broad range of subjects and vocational courses on offer at Key Stage 4 and the school uses its links with other providers and local businesses well to ensure that students are prepared for the future. The Launchpad initiative, shared with other providers, ensures an excellent, motivating and suitable route to vocational qualifications, which is improving attendance and achievement. The school's curriculum is broad and meets the needs and expectations of the students. However, although specialist status in technology ensures that participation in this area is high, the school is not meeting its targets for the proportion of students engaged in courses in modern foreign languages. For those who do choose such courses, attainment is high. Good care, guidance and support ensure that students are supported well when they join the school and make the transition between different key stages. Those who need help with behaviour and motivation are catered for well through the Tewkesbury Learning Centre. Support for vulnerable students and families is well targeted and successful.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<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 headteacher and senior team show a strong determination to improve the school so that strengths are built on and areas of relative weakness are properly addressed. Strategic planning is detailed and focused clearly on raising standards. Students are set challenging targets which are well understood by them and by their teachers. Progress is carefully and regularly tracked so that teaching can be modified to improve learning. A programme of regular lesson observations by senior leaders provides good evidence of the quality of provision and its impact. Middle leaders are increasingly involved in these procedures to good effect. However, there is a tendency to judge learning solely on what is observed during lesson observations, so that the judgement of the overall quality of teaching over time is sometimes too generous when compared with results in tests and examinations. Consequently, self-evaluation by faculties and by senior leaders is sometimes optimistic in its conclusions. Nevertheless, the ambition and determination of school leaders is clearly evident in the targeting of resources and energy to areas where the need is greatest.

The school is well supported and challenged by a governing body that is knowledgeable about the school, ambitious for its future and determined to be well informed of its progress towards improvement. Variations between the performance of different groups of students has been noted by the school which has consequently tracked their performance rigorously. This is beginning to show a 'closing of the gaps' and leaders are determined to ensure that this satisfactory impact matches the good quality of their work in tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in personal development and within the school community. The school recognises that the work for promoting community cohesion is at an early stage. Planning for this on a local and international level is stronger than the promotion of an understanding of national diversity. Safeguarding is rigorous in all respects. Partnerships are a strength, improving the curriculum, supporting behaviour and well-being and providing help to other schools through the specialist status.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*



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<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Sixth form

Attainment in the sixth form is above average and students make good progress in their learning. Success in gaining places in suitable employment and in further education, including appropriate university courses, is high. Teaching is good, using an appropriate variety of approaches to encourage independent learning. Learning is well supported by good assessment in lessons and constructive and detailed feedback on written assignments. Leaders and tutors provide highly valued support for students who are very positive about their sixth form experience, as are their parents. The quality of advice and guidance for future pathways and personal safety and development is high. The curriculum is broad and provides a suitable range of courses for a wide variety of students, whether engaged on traditional A Level courses, following vocational courses at the same level, or accessing Level 2 courses through the Launchpad centre. Leadership and management are good, underpinning and promoting the good provision and outcomes.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers express confidence and satisfaction with the school. The great majority of replies to the questionnaire were positive. In their comments many parents and carers were positive about the care that their children received, the quality of education and the work of the school's leaders and managers. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour in the school but, during the inspection, behaviour was good in classrooms and around the school buildings and grounds.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tewkesbury 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 420 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1703 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	145	35	2532	60	11	3	6	1
The school keeps my child safe	137	33	270	64	9	2	2	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	154	37	247	59	13	3	2	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	164	39	236	56	16	4	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	143	34	259	62	9	2	2	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	97	23	278	66	33	8	4	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	80	19	280	67	44	10	5	1
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)	134	32	238	57	19	5	3	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	131	31	265	63	14	3	4	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	106	25	265	63	27	6	11	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	82	20	281	67	23	5	8	2
The school is led and managed effectively	176	42	229	55	7	2	2	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	135	46	213	51	7	2	4	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

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.**



14 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Tewkesbury School, Tewkesbury GL20 8DF

Thank you for the help that you gave us when we inspected your school, for speaking to us in lessons and meetings and for filling out the student questionnaire.

We agree with you that yours is a good school. The school looks after you well and you make good progress in your personal development and in your learning. During the inspection your behaviour was good in lessons and around the school. The school has a broad curriculum which enables you to choose from a wide range of courses, which the school's leaders are constantly reviewing. They work well with other schools and a further education college to provide you with the best routes for your future. You are taught well so that students leave Tewkesbury well equipped for going into appropriate education, employment or training. The large sixth form provides a good education and students make good progress there.

At the moment, boys do not make such good progress as girls and results in English are not as good as in other subjects, although they are improving. We have asked the school to tackle these issues by:

- monitoring the progress of boys and girls regularly and closely so that lessons can be planned to meet their particular needs
- making sure that the excellent teaching and learning in the school is used as a model for other staff and students
- judging the quality of teaching by looking at results over time
- making sure that you are given lots of opportunities in all your subjects to improve your skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

You can help by continuing to maintain your standards of attendance and behaviour and by making your views known through the school council.

I wish you success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Harrett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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