

Waseley Hills High School and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116951
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	338925
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob Hubbleday HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	957
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Hogg
Headteacher	Alan Roll
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
School address	School Road Rubery, Rednal Birmingham
Telephone number	0121 453 5211
Fax number	0121 457 8850
Email address	office@waseleyhills.worcs.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 35 lessons and slightly more teachers because of team teaching in a few lessons. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of Governors and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and, among other things, looked at the school development plan, assessment information, monitoring records and the governing body's minutes. They also took note of the responses on student and staff questionnaires and 188 parental questionnaires.

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

- provision in mathematics
- the implementation of plans to develop teaching and learning
- the management of behaviour
- provision and outcomes for the most-able students
- the development of the sixth form.

Information about the school

The school lies on the outskirts of Birmingham and has specialist status for business and enterprise. It is in partnership with the Forward Consortium to support 14-19 provision in North East Worcestershire. The school has specialist provision for students whose hearing is impaired and for those with autism. Although this means that more students than usual have a statement of special educational need, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average overall. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the academic year. The school has struggled to recruit specialist teachers of mathematics. Building work to create an extension to the sixth form centre is nearing completion.

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

The school is at a transitional stage. Its track record, the quality of its self-evaluation and the impact of actions by leaders and managers show that it has satisfactory capacity to improve. A new headteacher with sharp insight into how the school can do better has rigorously evaluated its performance. As a result, the school is tackling appropriate priorities. Some necessary tightening up of policies and practice, such as the way behaviour is managed, has already led to significant improvement. Many teachers, staff, students and parents and carers speak of positive changes but acknowledge that progress since the last inspection has not been emphatic. Despite significantly above average examination results on some measures, outcomes in mathematics declined considerably and students, particularly the more-able, have not always made satisfactory progress in a number of other subjects. Actions taken this year to reverse these trends have ensured that the students' achievement is satisfactory.

Issues over the quality of learning and teaching raised at the time of the last inspection remain central to the school's improvement. Strengths have been maintained but monitoring has not focused sufficiently on achieving consistency in the use of assessment and on engaging students' participation in lessons. Some leaders and managers have been unclear about their responsibility to secure these improvements. Some governors, too, have not heeded the distinction between individual and collective responsibility for taking action on a range of matters.

Sixth formers play an important role in the school's life and most achieve success. The leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory, with some real strengths in pastoral care and guidance. Broader strategic planning and evaluation are underdeveloped, for instance to determine how the curriculum might develop and the role of the consortium.

The school's specialist subjects make an enormous contribution to the students' academic success and their enjoyment. The school provides a breadth of opportunity in these areas which helps students of all abilities to make considerable gains in confidence and achievement. The school is also highly successful in ensuring that students are well protected. Its procedures for safeguarding are outstanding. Provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the specialist bases, is good and these students continue to make good progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the students' achievement by:

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- raising attainment and improving progress in mathematics by appointing permanent staff to vacant posts
- ensuring that more-able students make consistently good progress in every subject.
- Make the quality of learning and teaching across all subjects consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers:
 - use knowledge about the students' academic progress more effectively to plan work and provide support for individuals when required
 - make learning more interesting by having higher expectations of how students will participate in lessons.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders are clearer about their responsibilities and are held accountable for meeting stretching targets
 - there are robust processes for implementing policies consistently and following up shortcomings.
- Improve the strategic leadership of the sixth form by carrying out more searching evaluation of provision and using this to devise a coherent plan that makes full use of the potential of consortium arrangements.
- 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**

The students' achievement is satisfactory overall but varies considerably according to which teacher they are taught by. In around half of their lessons, the students work hard, take a real interest in what they are doing and focus well on improving their understanding and knowledge. In other lessons, they work compliantly but without any particular pride. This variation exists within and across subjects but there are some notable exceptions. The students' faces often lit up when inspectors asked about their work in the school's specialist subjects. The quality of learning is consistently good in business studies and, not surprisingly, achievement is above average. English is also generally successful in fostering good achievement. Achievement in mathematics has been a particular concern because of difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. Attainment in this subject was significantly below average last year but is improving considerably, and inspectors saw examples of very productive learning promoting higher standards. The school is well aware that more-able students have not always made as much progress as they could. Their achievement is still patchy and is no better than satisfactory in many lessons. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make the same progress as their peers.

The students feel safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with speedily. The students are well placed to make the most of opportunities for

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productive recreation, training and work when they leave school. The specialist emphasis on enterprise, in particular, generates a considerable degree of confidence in entering the world of business. Virtually every student who leaves the school enters training or employment. Behaviour around the school is often good and students and staff speak of noticeable improvements since September. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of times students have needed to be taken out of lessons and exclusion figures are low. Nevertheless, a minority of students require close direction and the teachers remain vigilant to maintain a suitable standard of conduct.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

There is a very small amount of teaching which is outstanding and a similar proportion which is inadequate. The rest is satisfactory or good in equal proportions. The specialist subjects lead the way in providing students with a consistently interesting diet of active approaches to learning. Several teachers in other subjects also demonstrate some flair in ensuring that students develop good work habits and make good progress. Often, however, lessons are dull and students are frustrated by the slow pace with which tasks

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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are introduced. Some of the teaching is based on low expectations of what the students themselves might contribute - by posing questions and working collaboratively. A common format for lesson planning has not delivered a consistently good quality of planning. There is often little reference to the levels of attainment and insufficient precision in defining learning objectives. There is a lack of clarity about planning to meet the needs of different groups of learners, other than those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For the latter, individual education plans are of good quality and used effectively. Students with hearing impairment or with autism are catered for very well, often through one to one support from teaching assistants.

The curriculum provides well for students in enabling them to choose from a wide range of imaginative options in the specialist areas. Young apprenticeship programmes, for instance, considerably enhance vocational opportunities. The flexibility of the curriculum to meet individual needs has enabled a number of potentially disaffected students, and others with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make exceptional progress. More able students benefit from the development of challenging courses in single science subjects and from the varied programme of enrichment activities. The school prides itself on knowing students as individuals and many spoke warmly of the support they had received to overcome problems. There are very well organised arrangements to provide pastoral guidance, for example when students are considering their options at 14 or moving into post-16 provision.

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?

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and its potential to perform better. Most of the senior leadership team understand why and how practice must change to secure faster improvement. Most accept that roles and responsibilities may alter to bring about clearer lines of accountability. The team can already point to some successes, such as improving behaviour and developing the use of assessment as a management tool to identify any unequal outcomes for different groups. Nevertheless, most acknowledge that there is a long way to go to embed the change in culture which is required to raise expectations consistently. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily but the varying quality of provision and outcomes across subject departments has not been tackled concertedly since the last inspection. This is especially true with regard to the leadership

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and management of teaching and learning. The school did not devise and begin implementing a common policy for these key areas until this academic year. A coherent and rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching began only last autumn. Appropriate professional development has been provided to a limited extent, but with little robust follow-up to ensure that initiatives are implemented consistently.

The governing body meets its statutory duties and is developing a better understanding of its role as a strategic body. The Chair of Governors has served the school tirelessly but has not found it easy to ensure that individual governors accept the importance of acting as one body. This is a significant distraction from the school's primary purpose.

The school has a satisfactory understanding of its local and regional context. It pursues appropriate avenues to promote community cohesion and has links, for example, with schools in Ghana and Nepal. It is a cohesive community and has carried out a simple audit of provision but has not formalised its planning in response to areas of weakness.

The school has shown that it is capable of leading the way on managing safeguarding procedures. Responsibilities are precise; training is comprehensive and of high quality, and guidance, for example on vetting arrangements, is followed meticulously. The local authority has adopted some of the school's policies as models of good practice.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

The students make satisfactory progress and attainment at A-level is broadly in line with results nationally. AS-level results in 2009 were below expectations. Attendance is

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average and many aspects of personal development are good. The students play a very positive role around the school by taking assemblies, acting as prefects and spearheading the school council's activities. The school offers a traditional range of academic courses, supplemented recently by BTEC nationals, which link effectively with vocational courses in Key Stage 4. The consortium makes little impact on the choices the students make and uptake of courses off-site is low and reducing. Teaching is often good but students report that marking and feedback are inconsistent across departments. However, they speak positively about the general quality of care and guidance they receive, especially if they are aiming at university entrance. The pastoral leadership of the sixth form is strong but self-evaluation encompassing a broad strategic view of provision is underdeveloped. Consequently, development planning lacks coherence.

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

The responses to the parental and carers' questionnaire contained a range of views on several topics. The only point on which there was consensus was that students had suffered with variable teaching in mathematics because of the lack of some permanent staff. The school accepts this and has been active in finding solutions. Temporary arrangements involving senior staff have lessened the disruption experienced earlier in the year and new permanent appointments are being made. Other concerns centred on instances of bad behaviour, the quality of food at lunchtime, communication issues and children not making enough progress. Almost as many responses praised aspects of the school, particularly the care taken over students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the quality of education which had equipped children to go on to further education. Many of the responses indicated that parents and carers had begun to see definite improvements on a range of issues since the appointment of the new headteacher. The inspection team looked at all of these issues and concluded that the school is moving forward securely under the leadership of the new headteacher.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Waseley Hills High School and Sixth Form Centre 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 188 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 957 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	22	125	66	19	10	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	49	26	125	66	6	3	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	23	121	64	22	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	19	110	59	33	18	5	3
The teaching is good at this school	22	12	131	70	24	13	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	11	112	60	47	25	5	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	7	121	64	46	24	5	3
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)	28	15	117	62	21	11	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	13	125	66	28	15	5	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	12	107	57	35	19	16	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	11	106	56	33	18	9	5
The school is led and managed effectively	23	12	127	68	16	9	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	18	124	66	17	9	7	4

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). 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"> ■ 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.



14 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Waseley Hill High School and Sixth Form Centre

I would like to thank all of you who helped the inspectors gain an informed view of your school by meeting with us or filling in a questionnaire. This letter contains a brief summary of our findings starting with the key strengths which we found.

Your school is good at providing pastoral support and guidance, and the way it makes sure you are safe is outstanding.

The range of subjects you can study is good, especially in business and enterprise, which ensures that you are well prepared for the future.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially those whose hearing is impaired or who have autism, are catered for well and make good progress.

Other aspects of the school are satisfactory and improving. Your new headteacher is making some important changes which are designed to make the school a good one by the time it has its next inspection. We have asked the school to continue concentrating on the areas it has already decided are those which need most attention. These are to improve:

- your achievement in mathematics and the progress which the more-able of you make in a number of subjects
- the way that teachers use assessment information and plan for your active involvement in lessons
- the way that senior leaders check that policies are carried out well
- your school's understanding of what is working well and what needs to be developed in the sixth form.

You can play your part by showing teachers that you want to be more involved in your own learning, for example by asking questions about your work.

My best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Rob Huddleday

Her Majesty's Inspector

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