

Arnold Hill School and Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122847
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	359315
Inspection dates	23–24 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Gwen Coates HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1680
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	308
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Bradley
Headteacher	Robin Fugill
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2007
School address	Gedling Road Arnold Nottingham
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 56 lessons or parts of lessons and saw the same number of teachers. They held meetings with students and with staff and a telephone conversation took place with the chair of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, faculty self-evaluation documents and reviews, reports of the school improvement partner and minutes of the governing body. The team analysed 127 parental questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which the rate of progress students are making in their learning, as evidenced in lesson observations, is being translated into solid achievement
- whether teaching and assessment are sufficiently differentiated and challenging in order to stretch students of all abilities and to provide them with sufficient opportunities to understand clearly how to improve their own performance and to develop as independent learners
- how far the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and post-16 meets the needs of all students, and in particular those who are less academic
- how effectively the needs of all groups of vulnerable students are met, in particular those on the autistic spectrum, those who have been transferred from other schools because they were at risk of exclusion and those on school action
- how accountable middle leaders, including leaders of the sixth form, are for their areas of responsibility.

Information about the school

Arnold Hill School and Technology College is much larger than the average secondary school. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is below the national average but is increasing steadily. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average and the proportion of those with a statement of special educational need is well below the national average. Within these groups, the school has a significantly high number of students with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

The school has specialist technology college status.

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

Arnold Hill School and Technology College is a good school. The outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for its students, together with a curriculum tailored to their needs, effective tracking of their progress and well-targeted interventions, ensure that students are able to make good progress in their learning and to achieve well. This is evident in their above average attainment at GCSE.

The Principal and his Head of School have guided the school well since they took up their positions and have built a strong senior leadership team and a strongly developing group of middle leaders. They have tackled underperformance promptly and effectively, whether it be students' underachievement or the underperformance of teachers or faculties. Together, the leadership team has created a culture of improvement and high aspirations that is enabling significant change to take place in provision and ultimately in the achievement of, and outcomes for, all students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has good capacity to improve further. Its senior leadership team has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has identified appropriate priorities that need to be tackled in order to improve students' achievement further. Its self-evaluation, both at whole school and faculty level, is sharply focused, self-critical and accurate. Challenging and realistic target setting is resulting in good outcomes. In pursuing its priority of improving achievement over recent years, the school's performance has improved significantly in key areas of provision, most notably in the care, guidance and support it provides for students and also in the curriculum it offers them. Equally, its clear focus on improving other outcomes that contribute to students' ability to achieve - attendance, which is now high, behaviour, which is now good, and exclusions which have fallen significantly - is enabling the school to concentrate its attentions on raising students' achievement.

While the quality of teaching has improved, there are still pockets of inconsistency in the extent to which all teachers are implementing the school's learning and teaching strategy. This is particularly so in relation to classroom management, in the extent to which teachers are able consistently to match teaching and learning strategies to students' needs and the opportunities students have to take charge of their own learning. Via its own self-evaluation, the school is keenly aware of existing weaknesses in teaching and is employing a range of strategies at whole school and at faculty level to overcome these.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- – Raise the quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 from satisfactory to good in order to improve further the rate at which students make progress in their learning. Do this by ensuring the consistent application of the school's learning and teaching strategy and in particular by:
 - ensuring that all teachers consistently apply the school's accepted classroom management strategies
 - developing teachers' ability to match teaching and learning strategies more closely to the needs of students of varying abilities so that all are challenged and stretched to think hard.
- Improve students' independent learning skills so that they are able to take more responsibility for their own learning. Do this by:
 - encouraging teachers to use more open-ended, higher-order questioning during lessons
 - providing increased opportunities for students to learn collaboratively and to reflect on their learning so that they can challenge themselves, take risks and learn from their own mistakes.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students join the school in Year 7 with attainment on entry that is broadly average. They make good progress in their learning and as a result, attainment by Year 11 is above average. The attainment of all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, improved in 2010. This is a reflection of the good progress all individual and groups of students have made in their learning. It shows the effectiveness of sharply focused intervention strategies and tracking arrangements that are resulting in gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of learners being narrowed.

These are some of the strengths in students' personal development.

Students say they feel safe and that the rare cases of bullying or racist incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by the school.

Students' behaviour is good around the school and in most lessons. Occasionally, it falls below this standard when the teacher does not use consistent strategies to manage it.

Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle including issues relating to diet, fitness, mental health and the use of drugs.

Students adopt a wide range of responsible roles within school, such as peer mentors, sports leaders and members of the school council, all of which contribute to improving the provision for students of the school, pupils in feeder schools and members of the local community.

Almost all students continue on to further education, employment or training at the end of Year 11.

Students reflect on their experiences, develop positive self-esteem and celebrate a wide

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range of different cultural and faith events.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Improvements in teaching are not yet consistently evident across the school. There are several reasons for this. In a few lessons, the management of behaviour is not yet sufficiently secure. A few teachers do not plan work that matches closely the range of learners' abilities. In a few instances, teachers tend to dominate the lesson, so students are not always developing good independent learning skills.

Despite these weaknesses, there are many examples of good practice in teaching and assessment to support learning. These include:

- a lesson planning format that encourages a wide range of learning activities and a prompt and engaging start to lessons
- regular reference to learning outcomes that provides good opportunities for students to engage in self- and peer-assessment
- good relationships between teachers and students
- imaginative use of technology that enlivens lessons and appeals to a wide range of

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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abilities

- high expectations and fast paced learning that engages students, challenges them to think hard and develops their higher level skills
- effective feedback in lessons and in marked work that informs students of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and mostly meets the needs of the wide range of students at both Key Stages 3 and 4. It ensures that specific provision is made to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and the most able. A very wide range of options, both traditional academic and vocational, are now available to all students at Key Stage 4 and collaborative working with a local college extends provision further. Specialist technology college provision has enhanced the curriculum within the school and in its 10 feeder primary schools. This is particularly the case in design and technology but also in other subjects, such as science, mathematics and humanities, which are benefiting from digital technologies. Extra-curricular provision is extensive and there is good take-up of this by students.

A fully integrated care, guidance and support structure ensures the individual needs of all students are met exceptionally well. There are excellent transition arrangements for students at each stage of their education. For example, Year 7 students are made to feel welcome and safe in this very large secondary school. The highly effective and very secure structure to monitor and support students pastorally and academically is having a significantly positive impact on students' outcomes. This is particularly evident in relation to attendance, which has improved significantly as a result of the school's well-planned approach. Equally, the school's internal exclusions have halved whilst the rate of fixed term exclusions is low with no permanent exclusions. Arnold Hill is a lead school in one-to-one teaching and support. Students with specific learning needs are exceptionally well supported and as a result are able to make good progress. Many examples are apparent of where interventions by the school have enabled individual students to succeed, including those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder, those on school action and those who are part of a managed move from another school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders are successfully embedding ambition and driving improvement. They have developed a culture of high expectations, where staff are fully committed to

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improving the achievement of students and the quality of support they are offered. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and a well conceived learning and teaching strategy, including support mechanisms such as coaching and mentoring, are bringing about improvements in outcomes for students. The school recognises that although the quality of teaching has improved, the impact of its strategies is still variable and further work is needed to improve on this. The improving quality of middle leaders' work is the result of carefully targeted support and development and impressive investment in the school's own staff. Very good use of data informs the school's priorities and its strategic direction. The governing body contributes effectively to strategic decision making and discharges its statutory duties well. The school adopts recommended good practice across all relevant areas in relation to safeguarding.

The school promotes equal opportunities very well and its comprehensive monitoring and intervention strategies ensure that there is no discrimination and that all students and groups of students have every opportunity to achieve well. The school has a good understanding of its context in relation to faith, ethnicity and socio-economic groups. Its work makes a strong contribution to the school community, the local and regional communities and the broader national and international communities of which it is a part. The school has developed a wide range of effective strategies for engaging with parents and carers. It works effectively with a wide range of organisations and external agencies to promote the learning and well-being of its own students and those in partner schools. Partnerships with other schools and colleges in the region, some as a result of its specialist technology college status, have had a positive impact on improving classroom practice and on applied learning provision. Good international partnerships have been forged with schools, for example, in Brazil, India and France. The focus of these partnerships involves language learning, sport, music and sustainability issues.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Attainment and the progress students make in their learning have been improving over recent years and most groups make at least good progress.

Retention and completion rates are good and almost all students progress to higher or further education or into employment.

Students are good role models for younger students. They make a strong contribution to the life of the school and the community, with a very large number (80 in 2010) taking the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's award.

Teaching is good and data are used well to inform lesson planning, to match teaching and learning to the needs of students and to bring about good learning. Teachers use technology well to support learning. Constructive feedback is provided so that students are clear about their progress.

Curriculum provision has been extended to provide a significant range of level 2 and 3 academic and vocational courses. Pathways are tailored to meet individual needs and are linked to clear support and guidance. An enrichment programme is offered, some of which students initiate themselves.

Care, guidance and support are good and built into a weekly programme supported by form tutors. Students speak very highly of the support they receive in relation to their studies and in relation to their further/higher education or job applications.

Rigorous tracking of students' progress ensures that underachievement is identified promptly and appropriate intervention is put in place.

There is a clear commitment to developing and driving improvement in the sixth form as evidenced by the well-structured strategic plan, the recent appointments and the expansion of the sixth form team.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
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

Views of parents and carers

The table below indicates that, given the size of the school, there was a small response rate from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire. Despite this, the responses that were received were wholly positive and confirmed the findings of inspectors. In

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particular, there were a number of detailed and very supportive letters from the parents and carers of students with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at insert name of 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 delete as appropriate: inspection team inspector received 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1680 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	40	70	56	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	40	73	58	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	33	67	53	7	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	30	72	57	5	4	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	31	72	57	4	3	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	25	72	57	10	8	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	25	68	54	13	10	2	2
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)	41	33	54	43	4	3	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	37	67	53	4	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	23	70	56	13	10	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	28	59	47	18	14	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	49	39	59	47	10	8	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	37	71	56	2	2	2	2

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



27 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Arnold Hill School and Technology College, Nottingham, NG5 6NZ

During our visit to your school, my colleagues and I had the pleasure of meeting some of you and of observing many of you during your lessons. Overall we judged your school to be a good school. You receive exceptional care, guidance and support and are provided with a good curriculum that meets your needs very well. Staff monitor the progress you make and intervene whenever it appears that you are underachieving. As a result of this strong provision you are able to make good progress in your learning and achieve well. Your attendance is high and your behaviour is good.

Your school has a strong leadership team that is focused on improving the achievement of all students in the school, regardless of their ability. Together with inspectors, it recognises that there are some aspects of learning and teaching that need to improve. These areas are:

- classroom management, which is not as good as it might be in all lessons
- the extent to which teachers match teaching and learning activities to your particular needs
- the opportunities provided to improve your independent learning skills.

Inspectors have asked the school to improve these areas. You can all help the school by behaving well in all your lessons, by contributing effectively in lessons whenever you are asked to do so by teachers and by working hard when you are asked to work independently.

Yours sincerely

Gwen Coates

Her Majesty's Inspector

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