

Pedmore Technology College and Community School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 103859 |
| Local Authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 355477 |
| Inspection dates | 28–29 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Mary Davis |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 641 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Robert Evans |
| Headteacher | David Kemp |
| Date of previous school inspection | 3 October 2007 |
| School address | Grange Lane Pedmore, Stourbridge DY9 7HS |
| Telephone number | 01384 816660 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 38 lessons and 37 teachers, and held meetings with groups of students, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies and development planning; data related to the tracking of students' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; minutes of the governing body meetings; students' work and 97 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from students. During the inspection, Year 10 students were on work experience, so no lessons were observed for this year group.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What assessment information and lesson observations reveal about the learning and progress of students in current classes, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys.
- The consistency of the quality of teaching across the school.
- How consistently assessment is used to support learning and how well students understand how to reach their targets.
- The impact that specialist college status is having across the school and the wider community.

Information about the school

Pedmore Technology College is a smaller than average school of its type. Although the roll has been falling over the past five years, it has an increasing intake of students of ethnic minority background, particularly of Pakistani origin. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average but only a very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school works closely with other local 14 to 19 providers as part of the Stourbridge Educational Trust.

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

Pedmore Technology College is a good school. Student outcomes, particularly their achievement, are rising strongly as a result of the school's good provision. Recent changes in curriculum have ensured that courses more closely match students' individual needs, particularly the needs of boys at risk of being excluded. This has resulted in a sharp rise in the rates of progress and attendance as students are now keen to come to school, enjoy their lessons and behave well. One Year 11 student commented on how much behaviour has improved since he started at the school. Students are extremely proud of their school and greatly value the time and effort teachers give to them and the advice and guidance provided. One student referred to the 'endless amount of support' she has received, enabling her to achieve her potential.

In 2010 there was dramatic rise in attainment at GCSE from a previously low level: evidence seen in lessons and from the school's rigorous tracking of students' progress shows that this is being sustained. Progress observed in lessons during the inspection across the school was good and in Year 11 lessons, particularly in English, it was outstanding. This is because students have a high degree of independence in their learning. They have an excellent understanding of the criteria by which they will be assessed and, as a result, know exactly what they need to do to achieve the highest grades. While the overall quality of teaching is good with much outstanding practice observed, a small proportion of inadequate teaching was seen in Key Stage 3. Here teachers fail to set realistic targets or to evaluate how well students are learning. As a result, misunderstandings occur and students are unable to achieve the lesson objective. In some subjects, programmes of study and resources are not sufficiently matched to meet the range of students' needs. Although independent learning is well promoted there is some inconsistency between subjects and teachers, so not all students understand how to improve their work. A wide variety of courses are provided and these are personalised to meet the needs of students. Specialist subjects are central to the development of the curriculum and provide opportunities to work in partnership with other providers.

Students are able to take on roles of responsibility within the school enabling them to develop leadership skills. The large team of prefects are well led by the head boy and girl in a variety of activities that benefit the school and wider community. Students of all backgrounds get on well together and celebrate the diversity of the school's community. There is a high level of respect for different beliefs and students talk with understanding about the importance of community cohesion.

The good quality of care, guidance and support provided is greatly valued by students and their parents and carers. Year 11 students spoke of the high quality support and advice they receive that has enabled them all to secure places at college or in apprenticeships. Transition into school is managed well, enabling Year 7 students from diverse

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backgrounds to settle quickly. Those for whom circumstances make them vulnerable, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are well cared for, enabling them to achieve well although the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of this support on their progress requires further refinement.

The inspirational headteacher is supported by a team of senior leaders who share his high expectations, drive and ambition for taking the school forward, resulting in significant improvements since the last inspection. The school's work to ensure a cohesive school community is outstanding, particularly its work to support the cohesion of different racial groups within the community and by providing opportunities for students to gain first-hand experience of issues affecting national and international communities. The accuracy and rigour of systems for tracking, monitoring and analysing the impact of the school's provision are effective. However, although these strategies are wide ranging, systems to analyse the performance of different groups of students are currently cumbersome.

The governing body is supportive of the school and its members are highly valued by the school's leaders. They are increasingly holding leaders to account although their effectiveness in doing so, and the extent to which they are able to contribute to strategic planning, are limited by their lack of first-hand experience of the school's work. All leaders know the school's strengths and areas for development and have a good capacity for building on and sustaining recent improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing outstanding practice to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better at both key stages by:
 - fully embedding the use of assessment to support learning so that teachers evaluate the learning taking place in lessons, enabling them to support and challenge students according to their needs
 - ensuring that teachers plan and effectively resource programmes of study that challenge the range of students' needs
 - consistently promoting the independent learning of all students across the school by ensuring that they know how to improve their work.
 - Refine and extend monitoring procedures to ensure that:
 - the impact of interventions and support can be effectively evaluated, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - the analysis of assessment data enables patterns of progress of different groups of students to be more easily identified, to ensure that they are all reaching their full potential.
- Improve the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring that it is more systematically involved with strategic planning
 - increasing opportunities for governors to gain first-hand knowledge of the school's work.

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Students join the school with attainment in English and mathematics slightly below national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is broadly average and rising. In 2010, the proportion of students gaining five GCSE passes at A* to C was above the national average, as were results in English. Results in mathematics, though below average in 2010, are steadily rising. These results showed that students make good progress from their starting points, and this was particularly so in English where lessons are fast paced, challenging and exciting. Attitudes to learning are good. Students concentrate well, often engrossed in their work, are keen to do well and excited when they are successful. Relationships are good and a high level of mutual respect is evident. Students enjoy working together in groups and support each other well. They particularly enjoy active tasks that are relevant to their experience. For example, in a Year 9 French lesson, students enthusiastically conducted a survey on television programmes. They recorded the results using challenging vocabulary that they were able to practise during the task, reinforcing their fluency and understanding and enabling rapid progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, including those at an early stage of learning English, make equally good progress as a result of the support they receive both in and outside of the classroom. Boys were seen to be making equally good progress to girls during the inspection, particularly in mathematics where teaching methods have been adapted to meet their needs.

Students say they feel safe, well cared for and well known by adults. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and value the advice they receive as part of 'Learning for Life' lessons. They say that these lessons also provide opportunities to examine relationships and promote a healthy lifestyle and provide opportunities for them to reflect and form opinions. This supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older students are active in supporting younger ones. For example, Year 10 students work with those in Year 7 to improve their reading skills. There is a calm atmosphere in the school, both in lessons and around the school, and students are polite and welcoming. Students are adamant that racism is not tolerated and that bullying is rare. They value the wide range of opportunities for physical activity, including swimming in the school pool, and have a good understanding of what constitutes a balanced diet. The 'student voice' is a key element in the school's evaluation processes and students actively promote ideas to improve both facilities and the quality of the provision. They express their pride in the amount of money they have raised for a variety of charities, many through innovative methods that have involved the whole school. For example, they have provided significant support in working with the local community to raise funds for a project in Pakistan. Students' attendance and basic skills in literacy and numeracy are rapidly improving. These, and students' effective application of information and communication technology, together with the 'real world' contexts used in many subjects across the curriculum and opportunities to experience the world of work, prepare students well for their future economic well-being.

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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 | 3 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Although teaching in Year 11 is consistently good or outstanding, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 is less consistent. In a few of these lessons, teachers' subject knowledge was weak so they passed on inaccuracies and failed to plan lessons that built progressively on prior knowledge and understanding. However, in most lessons observed, teachers provided a variety of active and exciting tasks that were relevant and appropriately challenging, enabling students to develop their skills and apply them to new situations. In the best lessons, learning is fast paced. Here, teachers explain and model tasks well so that students can make a quick start. Questioning is used well to probe understanding and to evaluate learning. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and re-visited at the end of the lesson to ensure that they have been achieved. Most teachers have high expectations of what their students are able to do and seek to raise students' aspirations by ensuring they understand the criteria for the grade above their target, enabling them to aim higher. This generates excitement when students recognise high-level elements in their own and other's work. Resources, including new technology, are well prepared although some opportunities are missed to use white boards interactively, using them only as projectors. Adults are used well within the classroom to support those with special educational needs and/or disabilities or to provide 'booster' support for examination classes. Students say that they value the amount of time that teachers will give to them to help them improve their work.

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The curriculum is well organised and meets statutory requirements. It is kept under review and is regularly modified to ensure that all students' needs are met and this has had a significant impact on raised outcomes. Alternative pathways are provided at Key Stage 4, such as the Prince's Trust and other work-based learning, successfully engaging those at risk of exclusion. The technology specialism has enabled the development of a variety of science courses, including the recent introduction of triple science, providing appropriate challenge for the highest achievers and is already enabling students to gain success. Other courses provide extra challenge for the most able, including critical thinking in conjunction with the local college. Urdu-speaking students are able to follow a course in this language from Year 7 upwards. A wealth of extra-curricular activities are well supported by all groups of students, including cookery club, science club and 'lesson 6' which provides opportunities for coursework catch-up.

Adults display consistently caring and supportive attitudes towards students, both in lessons and around the school. Behaviour management is effective and consistent, and is helping to reduce the number of students at risk of exclusion. Sustained support for students and their families has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance over recent years. Support for those students at an early stage of learning English, including the provision of specialist language support, enables them to settle in quickly. There is good communication between pastoral leaders, mentors and external support staff ensuring that all students are cared for. Support is well targeted to potentially vulnerable students and the school can point to a significant number of case studies demonstrating successful interventions in partnership with a variety of external agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

As a result of the drive of the senior leadership team, staff and students buy into the school's aim of raising achievement for all. Sophisticated tracking of students' progress enables leaders to identify and address any underachievement and enables them to set challenging targets for all students. Leaders' actions to improve the quality of teaching have been concerted and effective, and a high degree of consistent practice has been established particularly in English. Monitoring procedures, particularly by subject leaders, are not sufficiently focused on the impact of teaching on rates of progress, particularly at Key Stage 3. Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities in terms of health, safety and well-being adequately. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Child protection is at the heart of the school's work and the safety of the school site is well monitored. Safety issues are built into the curriculum and e-safety has a high profile across the school. The school seeks to engage parents and carers in its work and provides a wide variety of ways to

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support families. For example, 'mums and daughters' and 'dads and lads' sessions are provided and drop-in sessions to promote community cohesion and address neighbourhood issues that are affecting student progress. A wide range of partnerships, including with the feeder primary schools and the Stourbridge Educational Trust, are underpinned by the school's specialist status. These strengthen the curricular provision and support transition between key stages. The school works well to ensure equal opportunities and reduce and eliminate gaps between the performance of different groups of students. It is consistently ensuring that the provision meets all needs.

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming response of the small minority of parents and carers who completed questionnaire was positive, with most saying that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school. A few feel that they are not sufficiently involved in their children's learning and that the school does not listen to their concerns or suggestions. Inspectors found that the school is working hard to provide information and to involve parents and carers more closely in its work. A small minority expressed concerns about behaviour, but inspectors judge behaviour throughout the school to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pedmore Technology College and Community 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 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 641 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 29 | 30 | 66 | 68 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 37 | 38 | 57 | 59 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 42 | 43 | 52 | 54 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 29 | 30 | 60 | 62 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 27 | 28 | 62 | 65 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 30 | 31 | 51 | 53 | 12 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 20 | 21 | 67 | 70 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 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) | 29 | 31 | 60 | 64 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 23 | 24 | 64 | 67 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 22 | 23 | 58 | 60 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 5 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 17 | 18 | 59 | 62 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 20 | 21 | 67 | 69 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 4 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 36 | 37 | 54 | 67 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



30 March 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of Pedmore Technology College and Community School,
Stourbridge, DY9 7HS**

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited the school for its recent inspection. We were particularly impressed by your mature comments and your evident pride in your school. You behave well and celebrate the diverse make up of your school community, get on well with each other and make a considerable contribution to your school and local community.

You go to a good school. Your attainment by the end of Year11 is gradually rising: in 2010 the proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes was above the national average. This improvement in results and in your attendance rates was as a result of the good curriculum that you follow, which meets your individual needs and engages your interest. The teaching you receive is good and often outstanding, particularly in English, enabling you to learn well and make good progress. In the best lessons, you have such a good understanding of how you will be assessed that you can work independently to achieve your targets. Some other subjects do not perform as well: particularly in Key Stage 3, some teachers do not provide lessons that match your individual needs or evaluate how well you are learning during the lesson. We have asked the school to improve this. The good care, guidance and support that you receive enable you all to feel safe and well guided towards your future steps.

The leaders of the school work hard to make sure you continue to be well cared for and that you develop well as young people. We were particularly impressed by their outstanding work to promote opportunities for you to support the community. We have asked them to refine the ways in which they monitor how well you are progressing to that you all reach your potential. We have also asked members of the governing body to visit the school more often to gain first-hand experience of how well you are doing. You can do your part by continuing to work hard. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis

Lead inspector

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