

Welland Park Community College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	137170
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	395354
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	732
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hunt
Headteacher	Pascale Powell (Principal)
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
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Age group	11–14
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Introduction

Inspection team

Dilip Kadodwala

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Additional Inspector

Alan Brewerton

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Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one days' notice. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 27 teachers, of which five were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. An assembly was also observed and the lead inspector conducted a brief visit to a series of lessons with the Principal. Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of students and members of the governing body. They observed the college's work and looked at the tracking of students' progress, performance data, students' work, teachers' planning, whole-college and subject development plans, numerous policies, incident logs and case studies. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also reviewed information provided by parents and carers in 66 completed questionnaires. They took into account the views of students and those of staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized secondary school. It converted to an academy in August 2011. The school is part of a three-phase system and works collaboratively with one upper school in the local area. The great majority of students are from White British backgrounds, and the proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is very low. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or a statement of special needs is average. The academy is a designated specialist technology college. It holds a number of awards including Investors in People, Artsmark Silver, Sports Award accreditation and Healthy School 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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding academy. With very few exceptions, parents and carers express extremely positive views, describing it as an 'excellent, local inclusive school'.
- Students' achievement is excellent. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is consistently well above that attained nationally. This picture has been maintained over recent years and improved year-on-year. This represents sustained, outstanding achievement.
- The excellent quality of teaching contributes greatly to the very positive outcomes for students. Teachers consistently challenge all students, and students respond enthusiastically. Across a number of subjects, teachers use hand held information and communication technology (ICT) highly effectively to engage students. This also enables students to show their independence in learning. However, the effective use of these devices is not established across all subjects and, where it is absent, this limits opportunities for students to develop as confident, independent learners.
- Students feel extremely safe in college and have excellent awareness of safety issues and how to guard against them. Their behaviour is excellent. Students have very positive attitudes to learning, work hard in lessons and take pride in their achievements.
- The Principal provides inspirational leadership. A number of parents and carers commented particularly about her contribution, saying she is 'totally committed and passionate about the school', and 'her aims for the school have the students at the heart of everything they do; every single child is valued'. Systems for rigorous evaluation are deeply embedded and there is a clear focus on continuous improvement.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are

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outstanding and are a key factor in students' excellent outcomes. Other factors include an excellent curriculum and a highly effective promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enabling them to develop into thoughtful, responsible citizens.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend teachers' use of hand held ICT across all curriculum areas so that all students apply their skills and achieve consistently highly as independent learners.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students start in Year 7 with attainment that is broadly average. By the end of Year 9, students' attainment, based on secure teacher assessments, is well above average in English, mathematics and science. This has been the case over the past three years and college leaders are confident that the current Year 9 students will continue to sustain this trend. A robust tracking of students' attainment and progress shows that this is a similar picture for other subjects as well, including the college's specialist subject of technology.

Inspection findings from lesson observations support leaders' confidence. In almost half of the lessons observed, across a broad range of subjects, students' progress was judged to be outstanding. It was rarely less than good. Students were observed working at a brisk pace and showed a high level of interest in their work. Because tasks were captivating, students were almost always determined to succeed. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, the teacher pitched a written task at a demanding level, building on students' knowledge of National Curriculum levels. Students aspired willingly to higher levels, raising their own 'bars' and independently producing high quality responses. These were very effectively assessed by their peers, demonstrating students' ability to work together exceptionally well, and reflecting also their outstanding social development.

Leaders at all levels are very adept at tracking and monitoring the progress of different groups of students. Hence, teachers are able to make suitable interventions and support students' specific learning needs. For example, a small group of students who need specific help with literacy are taught in a focused way for part of the day to help them catch up with others. Their good progress enables them to work well in their other lessons. Students across subjects are very skilled in using their literacy skills because teachers plan for such opportunities and students are very keen to respond, including through reading aloud to others.

There are no significant differences in the rates of progress made by different groups of students, including the very few who speak English as an additional language,

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disabled students and those who have special educational needs. All these groups make better progress than all groups nationally and similar students in other schools. This is because teachers are highly skilled in matching work to specific needs and deploying well-briefed teaching assistants. A number of parents and carers commented very positively about the support given to their children who have special educational needs. Students who are known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to other groups of students. Overall, the great majority of parental views are that their children make good progress and inspectors fully endorse these views. Indeed, by the time students leave Welland Park, their progress is outstanding.

Quality of teaching

A very great majority of parents and carers say that their children are taught well. Inspection evidence indicates that teaching is outstanding, contributing consistently to students' excellent progress. Classrooms provide very well-maintained, stimulating environments with engaging displays, thus creating the right atmosphere for very successful learning.

Typically, teachers bring the best out of the students by challenging and encouraging them. Very successful teaching observed by inspectors includes:

- high levels of teachers' subject knowledge being used expertly so that students' knowledge and understanding is built up very securely across a wide range of subjects
- teachers planning precisely for the wide range of abilities and matching tasks deftly so that students learn very confidently
- very skilful use of questioning by teachers to assess the rate of students' learning in lessons and suitable adjustments being made to push the learning on to higher levels
- high quality marking showing detailed commentary, enabling students to make successful improvements to their work
- providing students with opportunities to reflect on their work, to consider moral issues and how these might apply to their own lives
- students being actively engaged in learning due to a broad range of resources being used, including digital cameras and tablet computers, to inspire and stimulate.

An example of the very effective use of ICT to stimulate independent and collaborative learning was seen in a Year 7 science lesson, where students were asked to evaluate the arguments for genetically modified food. Students made exceptional progress because they rose to the challenges set by the teacher; used hand held computer devices to assess their learning confidently; showed independence and creativity in developing their thinking skills; and cooperated excellently with each other. However the use of ICT to engender independent learning is not universal across every subject.

Teaching is carefully tailored for disabled students and those who have special

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educational needs, as well as students who are gifted and talented. Support staff are very well trained and involved in joint planning. Teachers chart these students' progress very well and adapt learning resources to ensure that they make the same rapid progress as their peers.

Where teaching is good but not outstanding there are not enough opportunities for students to be creative, independent learners. College leaders have accurately identified a priority of developing students' ability to learn more independently, for example by conducting their own research using ICT. This is so that students are even better equipped for further education and working life in the 21st century.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students behave very well in and around the college. Every student who responded to the questionnaire said that they feel safe at college. The parents and carers also overwhelmingly agree. Behaviour in lessons is usually exemplary and contributes to highly effective learning. Students listen very well to each other and show respect and maturity for their peers and adults. Some students, and their parents and carers, say that, in a very small number of lessons, a few students behave inappropriately. Leaders track such incidents robustly and tackle any misconduct quickly with sanctions and rewards to motivate sustained good behaviour.

There are clear procedures which staff and students follow resulting in the very high standards that are set for behaviour being maintained consistently. There have been no permanent exclusions over recent years. Fixed-term exclusions are well below the national average and are managed very effectively so that repeated instances by the same students are very rare. Students act as 'anti-bullying' ambassadors and willingly contribute their ideas towards behaviour procedures and policies. There is highly effective teaching about all forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and the dangers of the misuse of drugs and alcohol. Students arrive at the college and lessons very punctually and their attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Staff and the governing body wholeheartedly share the Principal's and the senior leaders' firm commitment to continuous improvement and their ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for students. The year-on-year improvement in the college's performance demonstrates the academy's outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

The staff form a very cohesive unit and morale is very high. Responses to the staff questionnaire show that all are proud to be a member of staff. College records show that teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection because of leaders' high expectations. Their observations of teaching and accurate evaluations ensure that performance management priorities for the staff and associated professional development contribute directly to improvements in classroom and leadership practices. Staff at all levels contribute very effectively to help drive forward

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improvement initiatives. Leaders ensure that trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers are very ably supported and encouraged to add value to the provision. One newly qualified teacher commented: 'This is a fantastic school for my first year.' The academy plans suitable actions, informed by regular and rigorous progress reviews. This ensures that students' well above average attainment is sustained and that their learning and progress are promoted very well.

The outstanding curriculum makes a very significant contribution to students' achievement. A view expressed by a parent echoes that expressed by others: 'The college provides a wealth of learning opportunities outside the school day. The extra-curricular activities and trips have greatly enhanced our son's learning experience.' Students can study two languages and an 'alternative curriculum' provides some students flexibility in learning for part of the day, thereby assuring that they also develop the necessary skills for continuing education. Three enrichment weeks during the year provide students with memorable experiences, as they participate in a wide range of artistic, cultural and sporting activities, often led by outside speakers. These weeks also enable students to show their leadership skills. Class teaching, as well as enrichment experiences, contribute very strongly to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The college complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding through well-managed procedures and through an ongoing review of their effectiveness. A well-informed governing body challenges and holds the college to account very effectively. A highly inclusive ethos supports excellent promotion of equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement; discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. All students achieve equally well, irrespective of background or ability.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



11 May 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Welland Park Community College, Market Harborough LE16 9DR

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your college recently. It was a great pleasure to meet you all. As you know, we came to see how well the college is performing and how you are all getting on with your learning.

We found that your college is outstanding. The Principal, senior leaders, governors and all staff work exceptionally well to make Welland Park a very successful college. This means that the quality of teaching is excellent, contributing to your outstanding achievement. Your attainment is well above average by the time you leave at the end of Year 9. Your enjoyment of learning across all subjects is clearly evident, and it makes a major contribution to the rapid progress which you are making. The vast majority of you behave very well in lessons and around the college. You told us that, very occasionally, a very small minority of students disturb your learning but that this is sorted out quickly. You can help to make your outstanding academy even better by always remaining fully focused on your work. In the questionnaire returns, you, and your parents and carers, said that you are extremely safe in college. We agree. You show a very positive approach to work and well done to those of you who act as 'anti-bullying ambassadors'. Your attendance is above average and your punctuality to college and lessons is excellent. Overall, we judge your behaviour and safety to be outstanding.

In some of the lessons we visited we saw you using ICT, such as tablet computers, very skilfully. These tools also enable you to work creatively and independently. However, the use of such tools and techniques are not established across all subjects. We have asked senior leaders to ensure that this happens so that you learn to work independently more consistently in all subjects.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

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