

# Washwood Heath Technology College

Burney Lane, Stechford, Birmingham, B8 2AS

**Inspection dates** 18–19 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>3</b>
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- All groups of students make equally good progress and learn well in most subjects.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of students achieving five GCSE grades A\* to C including mathematics and English has risen sharply from well below the national average to in line.
- Teaching is good across the school and some is outstanding. Staff have high expectations of students and use their good subject knowledge well to ensure students acquire new knowledge and skills.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance, which was low, is now average and punctuality has improved.
- The strong team of senior leaders rigorously monitor how well the school is doing and effectively tackle anything that is weaker. As a result, all areas of the school's work have improved and standards are continuing to rise.
- Governors bring a wide range of experience and skills to their roles. They understand the strengths and weaker areas of the school's work and challenge and support well.
- The small sixth form is good. Effective links with other schools ensures a good range of subjects are offered for students of all abilities. Good teaching ensures they make good progress and achieve well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in modern languages, history and geography requires further improvement.
- In some lessons, there are not enough opportunities for students to develop the skills to learn independently so they rely too much on their teachers.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, three of which were joint observations with school leaders.
- Inspectors also carried out shorter visits to lessons and held meetings with staff, students, governors and leaders with a range of responsibilities. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, safeguarding information, lesson plans and data used to monitor how well the school is doing and the progress students are making.
- Inspectors took account of six responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the results from the school's own survey of parents and carers.

## Inspection team

Elaine Taylor, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nigel Boyd	Seconded Inspector
John Greevy	Additional Inspector
Lynne Thorogood	Additional Inspector
Derek Wiles	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than most secondary schools. The majority of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for pupil premium (additional government funding) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average. The number who need extra help is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school currently meets the floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- There is no alternative provision managed by the school.

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

- Raise achievement further, especially in modern languages, history and geography by:
  - strengthening subject leadership, particularly the skills required to accurately evaluate the quality of learning in a lesson.
- Increase students' ability to work independently by:
  - ensuring teachers provide regular opportunities in lessons for students to develop analytical and problem solving skills
  - extending opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enjoy their learning and make good progress across the school. When they enter the school they are working below the levels expected for their age, especially in reading and writing. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, standards have risen and are above average on some measures. For example, in 2012 all students gained five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above.
- Progress in English and mathematics is above average for all groups of students. A focus on reading and writing in all subjects has improved progress in Key Stage 3. The additional funding known as pupil premium is being used well to provide extra support and challenge for less well-off students so that the gap between their achievement and all students nationally is closing rapidly. They attain higher standards than other groups in the school.
- Students who speak English as an additional language are supported well through separate language lessons and make good progress. In these sessions, staff have high levels of expertise and make very good use of visual prompts and materials which develop students' reading, writing and speaking skills rapidly.
- Additional adults provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs so their achievement matches that of other groups in the school.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress in lessons. They make very good progress in vocational courses and are good role models for younger students.
- Current data and learning in lessons indicate that the improvements in achievement are being maintained. However, underachievement in a few subjects is still evident. Opportunities to support students' reading, writing and speaking skills through modern languages are missed.
- A focus on reading has started to improve students' willingness and desire to read more widely. Students with reading levels well below that expected for their age group are being given intensive support and some make outstanding progress.
- Students develop very positive attitudes to learning and are well prepared for their next steps. This is indicated by the very low number not in education or employment with training after leaving school.
- The policy of entering students early for GCSE examinations is carefully considered. In English, the system whereby students are entered early for English Literature and at the end of Year 11 for English Language is having a positive impact on their attitudes to reading and their language skills.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons well and set work at the right level. In the most effective lessons, teachers show the students what is expected. For example, in an art lesson on engraving, outstanding modelling of the skill by the teacher made sure students were exceptionally clear what they were trying to achieve.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and achievement. As a result, in most lessons students get on well with their work.
- Most teachers check regularly that students are learning at a good pace, and most students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is not yet consistent across all lessons. As a result, in some lessons students move to the next task before they are ready.
- In some lessons there are too few opportunities for students to tackle more open-ended tasks which deepen their understanding of the subject and develop their independence. Teachers do not use searching questions to challenge students' understanding, especially more able students. However, in a mathematics lesson an example was seen of the department's approach to addressing this issue. The teacher used a technique labelled 'trick or trash', where students are

given two solutions to a problem and have to explain not just which is right and which wrong, but also why in each case.

- Technology, including the use of the web-based education system known as whoodle, makes a strong contribution to learning, for example to improve the quality of homework.
- Whilst most marking is good, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of the feedback to students. In some subjects this tends to focus on completion and presentation of work rather than the quality of learning.
- The school has reviewed how topics across subjects can support students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities in lessons to allow students to reflect on their learning, or pause to consider the implications of the topics being studied. The good opportunities for students to work together in groups and in some cases act as group leaders are making a good contribution to their social development.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- A positive ethos in the school means students behave well and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Exclusions have fallen significantly and are now low. Good use is made of the partnership across a group of schools to support the small minority of students who are less able to manage their own behaviour.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and occasionally outstanding when students respond to outstanding teaching and are given a high degree of say in their learning. Low level disruption in lessons is rare, because staff manage behaviour consistently and fairly. However, a minority of students are very passive in lessons and some are content with work that is of poor quality or incomplete.
- Students feel very safe and say that bullying is rare and dealt with effectively if it does occur. They understand well the different forms that bullying can take and are ready to intervene should they feel someone is being treated unfairly.
- Staff, governors and parents feel that students behave well now, in stark contrast to a few years ago.
- Around the school students are generally polite and helpful and younger students feel completely safe. Students understand how to keep themselves safe in practical lessons and have a clear understanding of issues relating to internet safety.
- Relationships between students and also between students and staff are good. There is no discrimination and students of all backgrounds feel cared for. The school works effectively with a number of schools in order to strengthen the harmony that exists between different ethnic groups within the community.
- Governors are closely involved in ensuring the safety of all members of the school community and of visitors and they regularly check the condition of the site. They have undertaken high levels of training on how to protect the most vulnerable students.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Systems are robust and punctuality has improved significantly to ensure that all groups of students make equally good progress.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She is ably supported by her senior staff. Together they have brought about outstanding improvements in all aspects of the school's work and students' achievement.
- Senior leaders and governors have focused on raising the quality of leadership at all levels and are taking action to address any remaining weaknesses.
- Rigorous systems to check students' progress mean that underachievement is swiftly identified and carefully planned support put in place and monitored. Technology is used exceptionally well for this and to keep parents and carers informed of all aspects of their children's development

- The senior leaders hold staff to account for the quality of their teaching and the outcomes for their students. Performance management systems are rigorous and set clear targets for improving teaching. Salary progression is linked to teaching success and all decisions are subject to the approval of governors.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses, leading in turn to well-focussed plans for improvement. Leaders at all levels are very ambitious for the students. They set and regularly review challenging targets to try and achieve the best for them.
- Training for staff is well focussed on both individual and whole school needs. Staff are positive about the school's leadership and working relationships are good.
- The curriculum is a strong feature of the school and plays a major role in helping students to achieve good outcomes. It is flexible to meet individual needs with options available in Years 9, 10 and 11. Curriculum pathways in Key Stage 3 meet students' needs well.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported through religious education, additional events, working with the community and a well-planned programme of assemblies.
- Partnerships and work with other schools significantly enhance the curriculum, especially in the sixth form. Team work within the school is also a strength, with opportunities being provided for all levels of staff, including teachers in the early stages of their career, to lead and apply their expertise to whole school initiatives.
- The local authority has taken a light touch approach to supporting this good school.

#### **The governance of the school:**

The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and that leaders effectively meet all safeguarding requirements. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development through their close links with the school and regular visits. They have undertaken a range of appropriate training, enabling them to hold leaders to account for students' achievements. They understand the various challenges facing different groups of students and ensure funding is used well to address their needs. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching and must give their approval for all promotions. A particular strength is the strong links with the community which the members of the governing body provide that ensure the school meets local needs exceptionally well.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103489
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	400623

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1363
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	68
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Darren Walsh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Beverley Mabey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 675 7272
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 675 9077
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@washwoodheath.bham.sch.uk

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