



Coppice Performing Arts School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104390
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277147
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Sue Harrison HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Ecclestone Road
School category	Community		Wednesfield
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV11 2QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558 500
Number on roll	887	Fax number	01902 558 501
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bill Briscoe
Date of previous inspection	20 January 2003	Headteacher	Mr Rob Rossides

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Coppice Performing Arts School provides for students aged 11-18, including a resource base for students with moderate learning difficulty. It was designated as a Performing Arts School in 2003. The school is situated in a socially diverse catchment area and is oversubscribed. The number of students eligible for free school meals has declined in the last few years. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language is low. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that its overall effectiveness is good and that it provides good value for money. There is strong leadership provided by the headteacher and a clear focus on improving standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been well tackled; the attainment of boys has improved, the standard of accommodation for teaching and learning is much better and there is increased sharing of good practice between staff. Teaching is generally good and the majority of students make good progress. The quality of the sixth form provision is satisfactory.

The majority of students enjoy school and feel they are in a safe, stimulating environment. They particularly enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that are open to them. Behaviour is generally good and attendance is slightly above national average. Parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the impact of the performing arts specialism for all students attending the school. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been successfully extended to provide more work related courses. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school works well with external partners in the development of the curriculum and has good links with support agencies.

The school has an effective system for monitoring and evaluating its work and a clear understanding of its strengths and issues. Given the effective leadership and management, the improving standards and focus on teaching and learning, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Recruitment has increased significantly, attendance is good and retention within year is high. Young people are enjoying their courses and the wider responsibilities they are encouraged to undertake in the sixth form. They contribute well to the local community and are developing work related skills. Teaching is satisfactory but students are not developing sufficient independent learning skills. Many students enter the sixth form with only the minimum requirements for advanced study. They make satisfactory progress overall but standards are below average for some of the boys. Pass rates are higher for GCE A level than AS courses. The proportion of those gaining higher grades is below the national average. The school has identified the reasons for the lower achievement of some students and appropriate action is being taken. The management of the sixth form has been strengthened. There are now good systems in place to track student progress, to identify students at risk of not meeting their targets and to provide additional support. The school is working with a consortium of other providers to develop the curriculum and the range of AS and A levels on offer has expanded since the last inspection. However, the school is

aware that these courses may not meet the needs of all students and they are working to develop other options at advanced level.

What the school should do to improve further

• Continue the improvement in the achievement of boys across the school. • Improve the standards in the sixth form by ensuring students are on the right course and are developing the skills needed for study at this level.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement is good for the majority of students. In the past, boys have not done as well as girls but the school has successfully put in place measures to address this problem. Standards are satisfactory overall. Student attainment on entry to the school is improving but has generally been below average. The majority of students make good progress. In national tests taken at the end of Year 9 standards are average and have been steadily improving in English and mathematics. The performance of students in GCSE examinations in Year 11 has also been rising to levels that are now close to the national average with 50% of students achieving five or more grades in the range A* - C in the 2005 examinations. Girls' progress has been traditionally good but in 2005 the performance of boys significantly improved. This general improvement has come from greater success in subjects across the curriculum. Ninety-nine per cent of students leave school with at least one GCSE pass and 2005 saw an improvement in the number gaining five or more A*-G grades.

The school sets appropriate goals for individual students and challenging overall targets for raising standards. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress in the main school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They behave well in class and around school. In the busy corridors students are considerate of others, particularly of wheelchair users who feel the school is a supportive and safe place. Students' social, moral and cultural development is good, with the performing arts contributing effectively to developing pupils' cultural understanding. The school is aware that pupils' spiritual development needs improving.

Attendance is satisfactory and is slightly above average mainly because students enjoy coming to school. They have a good attitude towards learning. Students have a strong sense of community and participate in a wide range of fund raising activities, charity events and performing arts events.

The new 'Healthy Schools' initiative and good provision for sporting activities supports the school's drive to make students pursue a healthy lifestyle. A recent move to more

healthy school meals has already contributed to improving the behaviour of some students. The school takes notice of the views of students. For example, it has acted sensibly and effectively in reducing further the few incidents of reported bullying, particularly amongst younger children.

The school improves students' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well as they progress through school enhancing their preparation for work and future education. For example in 2005, all Year 11 pupils identified as having learning difficulties are now in training, employment or have a college place.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. The school managers have robust procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and inspectors agreed with their judgement that the majority of lessons are good. These lessons are characterised by a wide range of learning activities with teachers being responsive to individual learning needs. Good lessons are lively and interesting; teacher explanations are clear and they encourage student participation with good use of questioning and other activities. In such lessons students respond with enthusiasm and enjoy their learning. For example in a Year 10 science lesson on chemical reactions, tasks were well prepared to make students think for themselves and an effective concluding session cemented students understanding. Satisfactory lessons provide a sound basis for students to learn but are less stimulating; students carry out tasks as required but with less enthusiasm. Through its sharing of effective practice, the school is working to further increase the proportion of good lessons.

Students' work is marked and assessed regularly. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants. Gifted and talented students are offered a rich programme of activities to develop their potential in their specialist areas. They are also suitably challenged and supported in their other curriculum subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that its curriculum is good overall and satisfactory in the sixth form. Recent improvements in Years 10 and 11 include better provision for work related learning and vocational education and training. For example, some students study at the local college of further education and all students have well planned work placements. There are productive arrangements with three partner schools to widen the courses available and successful measures to help students transfer

to the next stage of education or into employment. The school has systematic arrangements for personal, social and health education, although the school is sensibly considering not holding this in the last lesson each day when students may not be so receptive. Citizenship education is successfully mapped across various subjects to ensure that all aspects are covered. As a result, students grow as responsible and mature citizens. The curriculum is enriched with a stimulating programme of extra-curricular activities, including trips. A wide range of activities result from the school's performing arts designation. For example, during the inspection there were vibrant rehearsals for forthcoming musical performances and corridor displays showed the exciting work done through drama and dance. Much of this work involves joint arrangements with local community groups and schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Care, guidance and support are good. There are well established systems to support students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those under the care of the local authority. The school has recently improved how it tracks the progress of students. Good support is now given to those falling behind. This provision contributes to the recent improvements in GCSE results and progress made in students' personal development. Students are set realistic but challenging targets. Learning mentors are very effective in supporting students and contribute significantly to the welfare and progress of students.

Students generally make well informed choices about course options and careers because the guidance they receive is good. In particular the Connexions Service provides good quality guidance and support. For some students entering the sixth form, guidance should be strengthened to ensure the course chosen is appropriate. The school's procedures for ensuring the health and safety of students are effective. All staff have received training in health and safety matters. Students say they feel safe in and around the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money. The main issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed: the new accommodation for English, technology and the arts have brought benefits to teaching and learning and boys' performance has improved. The headteacher leads the school well; senior staff and governors appreciate his decisiveness and the way that he consults widely on issues of concern. As a result the school 'pulls together' well to continuously improve and there is high morale. This communicates itself well to pupils who value their education.

The school manages its performing arts college designation well. There are well planned opportunities to promote the arts with local partner schools and community organisations. The management of extra-curricular arts activities is good and positively impacts on the whole school ethos. The school has an accurate view of its own performance. Staff and governors concentrate well on improving those things that will make the most difference. For example, information from monitoring of teaching resulted in a school-wide focus on better use of assessment and better use of computers across subjects. Issues for improvement are clearly stated in the school development plan where there is a helpful review of the previous year's targets. As a result, middle managers are clear about how to interpret and deliver targets for improvement. Senior staff provide a strong lead in promoting equality of opportunity amongst both pupils and staff. Staff recruitment procedures are satisfactory and learning resources are well matched to students' specific learning needs.

Governance is good. Governors give their time generously and provide capable support and challenge to senior leaders. They take an active interest in the school's affairs and question managers closely. For example, most governors have links to a department, which helps them to understand what is happening in the school. They have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and use the budget well to realize agreed priorities. Recent improvements show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	insufficient evidence

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Coppice Performing Arts School Ecclestone Road Wednesfield Wolverhampton West Midlands
WV11 2QE

Dear Students

As you know a group of inspectors recently visited your school. Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us and for your help in finding our way around and giving us your views about the school. We really enjoyed visiting your school. I am writing now to tell you about our findings.

We think Coppice is a good school. It is well led and the teaching is good overall. Most of you enjoy your time at school, especially the wide range of opportunities to take part in activities outside lessons. Parents also think it is a good school. The performing arts specialism is well used, for example we know many of you take part in the shows. Good luck with 'Les Miserables'; you and the staff were working very hard in the rehearsals we saw! Most of you make good progress while you are at the school. It was good to see that in 2005 the boys did as well as the girls at GCSE for the first time. We have asked the school to ensure this improvement is maintained. Your behaviour in school is generally good. You told us that you feel safe and well supported by staff. The school sixth form has become more popular and there is a wider range of AS and A level courses on offer. Sixth formers make satisfactory progress and many of those who complete their A levels go on to university. We have asked the school to improve standards further in the sixth form by making sure everyone is on the right course and students are developing more of the skills they need for study at that level to help them achieve higher grades.

We are confident that your school will continue to improve and we wish you well for the future.

Sue Harrison Her Majesty's Inspector