

# Coppice Performing Arts School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104390
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	324038
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Shaw

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	886
Sixth form	95
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bill Brisco
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Rossides
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Ecclestone Road Wednesfield Wolverhampton WV11 2QE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558500
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558501

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
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## Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to administration error

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Coppice Performing Arts School is smaller than the average secondary school. It has a resource base for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school serves a socially diverse area and is oversubscribed. The number of students eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average whilst the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Coppice is a good and improving school permeated by an ethos of increasing achievement and raising aspirations. The contribution of the performing arts, its specialist area, is excellent. Productions, such as the recent 'We Will Rock You', regularly attract large audiences to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre. Students have even performed at Sadler's Wells. Standards in dance and drama are very high and targets are surpassed. Large numbers of students regularly participate in the arts, and groups such as the boys' dance troop thrive. Performance enhances learning, for example when students take the role of molecules to explore reactivity in science. Work in partnership with other schools, such as developing dance for physically disabled students, is exemplary. As well as developing students culturally, performing brings about superb spiritual development because students reflect on aesthetics and what they can achieve.

The school has a number of other outstanding features: the personal development and well-being of its students, the curriculum, leadership and management, its contribution to community cohesion and the way it works in partnership with others.

Standards, currently above average, are improving faster than the national rate. The percentage of students gaining five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE has risen from being below average to 10% above the national average in three years. The proportion of students gaining five or more higher grade GCSE passes including English and mathematics doubled in 2008 to reach the national average. Students enter the school having reached standards slightly below the national average and so the standards they reach at Coppice show that they are making good progress and achieving well. This is the result of good teaching and learning. An increasing proportion of the teaching is outstanding, underpinning rising achievement. The best teaching frequently develops independence but, overall, students are too dependent upon their teachers so are losing chances to experience the joy of discovery. All groups achieve broadly equally and the school has been effective in removing the gap between the performance of boys and girls, significant at the time of the previous inspection

Outstanding personal development is shown in the way that students develop rapidly into mature and considerate young adults. The school provides good levels of care, guidance and support for students. Students appreciate the way in which the school listens to what they have to say. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. This is one reason why they progress at the same rate as other students.

Management and leadership at all levels, including governors, share a common vision of improvement, stemming unwaveringly from the headteacher. Staff take on initiatives with enthusiasm so that success is the result of a team effort. The school accurately identifies its strengths and weaknesses, a major reason why it continues to improve. It now recognises that the rise in standards has to be sustained to become an outstanding school. The school is striving successfully to further community cohesion, not an easy task in the area served. One example of achievement in this field is the fact that parents from ethnic minorities living outside the area normally served by the school regularly seek places for their children at Coppice. The current rate of improvement in achievement and the exemplary features noted above show that Coppice has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 2

Coppice works successfully in close collaboration with two other schools to provide a good and improving quality of education for sixth form students. Standards are rising and are now broadly in line with the national average. Achievement is satisfactory and improving. One reason for this improvement is a more rigorous application of entry criteria than in the past so students are far less likely to embark upon courses on which they have little or no chance of success. Another significant reason for the improving achievement is the vast range of courses available in an outstanding curriculum, which not only combines the academic and vocational but also is finely tailored to meet local needs.

Teaching and learning in the sixth form is improving and is now good. This is another reason why achievement is improving. Assessment and target setting are now being used well and the progress students make is monitored very closely, with effective action being taken should a student not be at the expected level. A new and enthusiastic sixth form management team has brought about these improvements. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

The personal development and well-being of sixth form students is outstanding. All students, no matter what subjects they study, benefit enormously from the school's specialist status, not just culturally but also socially and spiritually. Students manifestly enjoy their education and speak glowingly of the school. The proportion entering higher education is increasing and represents real achievement when large numbers of students are from families with no experience of education beyond the statutory school leaving age.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the most effective teaching methods to increase the proportions of good and outstanding teaching so that teaching becomes outstanding overall.
- Maximise opportunities for students to work as independent learners so that, combined with the above point, achievement rises to an outstanding level.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

In 2008, standards in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 more than recovered from the dip of 2007, when they fell below the national average. Standards in Year 9 observed during the inspection show that this upward trend is being maintained and that standards are in line with the national average and represent satisfactory achievement. Significant improvements were made in 2008 in English, mathematics and science.

The school gained its best ever GCSE results in 2008, surpassing the demanding targets it set itself and placing its achievement in the top quarter of similar schools. In 2008, the proportion of students gaining a higher grade GCSE pass doubled in English and increased markedly in mathematics, both laudable achievements. Standards seen by inspectors in Year 11 confirm that the upward trend in achievement is being sustained. One measure of the good progress made by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is that in the last two years, all students have gained at least one GCSE pass.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of students is outstanding, not least because of the magnificent contribution made by the school's performing arts status. Performing or assisting with productions boosts self-confidence and brings about high levels of maturity and responsibility. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as students manifest the ethos of the school. Students are polite, courteous and considerate, demonstrated in the ways in which they listen to, and comment critically on, the views of others in lessons. They adopt healthy lifestyles, participating to high levels in sports, and, as to be expected, dance. They recognise the benefits of healthy diets. The large number of parked bicycles is evidence of students seeking to be physically active.

Students are highly respectful of the rights of others. In consequence, they adopt safe practices, recognising their own responsibilities in an adult manner. Bullying is rare and, because the school has highly effective practices to deal with any instance of threatening behaviour, students know they are very safe in the school. Surveys record very high levels of enjoyment and this is patently obvious when talking to students and observing them in class. Behaviour is outstanding, as evidenced by the enthusiastic support shown by the large audience observing boys dancing at lunchtime.

Attendance is at the national average, although above average for Wolverhampton. Unauthorised absence is below national levels. Work experience and vocational courses ensure that students' workplace skills are well developed. Students make an outstanding contribution to the community. The school council makes telling contributions, not least in making an input into planned building work. Opportunities through the performing arts take huge numbers of students into the community, performing for many community groups.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

A feature of all lessons is the very positive relations between teacher and students. As one girl said of her teachers, 'They're always smiling.' This permits teachers to develop the confidence of students so that they are not wary of contributing. Activities are well matched to the needs of students and good use is made of working in groups. Work is marked regularly and students are given helpful comments on how to improve their work. A science lesson demonstrated this. Following a test, students rewrote an answer following the advice given and submitted it for re-marking, so showing them that improving their work was not difficult.

In the best lessons, students make conjectures to develop their understanding, as exemplified in an outstanding religious education lesson. Here, students took on the role of detectives to explore the symbols connected to religions. They responded enthusiastically to the demanding challenges, collaborating effectively to gain an understanding of difficult concepts. In the few lessons that are satisfactory but no better, the pace of learning is mundane and the highest achieving students are not challenged to the full.

Inspectors broadly agreed with the school's assessment of lessons but evidence points to a good rather than outstanding picture. Nevertheless, the school is clearly and effectively

improving the quality of its teaching as evidenced by improving achievement and rising standards.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The school, in collaboration with other local schools and colleges, provides an outstanding curriculum that contributes significantly to raising achievement. The integrated curriculum being introduced in Year 7 is proving effective in developing the skills of how to learn. Concentrating the work normally covered in the first three years of the school into Years 7 and 8 is allowing greater personalisation of learning to take place in later years and for students to start on advanced courses at a younger age. Partnerships allow the school to offer five diplomas, widening choice yet further. The curriculum also includes courses carefully selected to meet the specific needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The performing arts component of the curriculum is outstanding, contributing significantly to rising standards.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities with high levels of participation in sports and the performing arts. These have very positive effects on students' personal, social and health education. Visits, including foreign excursions, extend the horizons for many and enhance learning. One example is the sixth form business studies visit to New York.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils know they are well supported at Coppice. Each student is valued as an individual. The progress of students is monitored carefully, with the more sophisticated systems used by some subjects being extended to other areas so that any underachievement can be rapidly identified. This has contributed to the eradication of marked differences in achievement between boys and girls.

The school maintains good links with other agencies, for example to secure specialist support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students are expertly guided in the choice of courses they make, which is especially important because of the wide range available. Questionnaires regularly inform the school of the opinions of parents, and parental views are acted upon, such as the current efforts to improve the quality of information on student progress supplied to parents. Good quality advice on options beyond the age of 16 is available. However, in spite of the efforts being made by the school, external pressure on some students results in higher than average numbers not continuing their education or entering employment with training after the end of Year 11.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Monitoring processes at all levels are robust and rigorous so that quality assurance is effective. This process involves staff at all levels. Refinements to programmes of target setting and intervention following the disappointing examination results of 2007 have brought the school back on its intended track and are increasing levels of attainment. Although in some cases the summative grades the school assigns to its processes are slightly above those shown in this inspection, crucially, the strengths and areas for development are precisely in line with those identified by inspectors and there is little doubt that self-evaluation is effective.

Close monitoring of the achievement of different groups has the effective outcome of all groups achieving broadly equally. The curriculum has been designed to give students a good understanding of differing communities. For example, on the 'Global Day', students in Year 7 explore cultures and religions, with some staff wearing costumes from other countries. The school is developing links with schools in other countries, an ambitious example being the investigation of planning a performing arts festival for a school in South Africa. The community makes extensive use of the school premises, with the school often taking the lead, for example in introducing local residents to golf.

Governors support the school enthusiastically and are well placed to evaluate the contribution it makes to the community served. They have good links with subject areas and are demanding in the quest to raise standards. However, their contribution is restricted on occasions by lack of external benchmarks so that they are over-reliant upon the school for information on which they base their assessments. Financial staff and resources are well deployed in the pursuit of value for money, with positive effects on learning and standards.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

## Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	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/or disabilities make progress	2	

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

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	3	1
The behaviour of learners	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 November 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Coppice Performing Arts School, Wolverhampton, WV11 2QE

On behalf of the team of inspectors that recently visited your school, I would like to thank you all for the very warm welcome you gave to us. We all remarked on how friendly, helpful and mature you were – a credit to yourselves, your parents and the school. We judge Coppice to be a good school that has many outstanding features. It will not surprise you to learn that we think the performing arts at Coppice are simply wonderful. Taking part in productions gives you immense enjoyment and pride, develops your skills of working together and increases your self-confidence. This is one reason why we think your personal development is outstanding.

The standards you reach are above the national average and mean that you are achieving well. These standards are improving. In the sixth form, standards are about average and represent satisfactory achievement but, once again, these standards are rising at a good rate. Teaching throughout is good and improving and you are given very helpful advice on how to improve your work.

The curriculum is another outstanding feature of Coppice because of the very wide range of courses from which you can choose. The school could not do this without its excellent collaboration with other schools and colleges. The school cares well for you and provides you with good guidance. We are rather disappointed that, at the age of 16, some of you choose not to continue in education or to get a good job, which means one that offers good training. I hope that all of you will think carefully about this comment.

Coppice is what it is because of the excellent leadership and management of the school. Mr Rossides, the staff and governors are very ambitious for you. They know what works well and what does not so that the school continues to improve at a good rate. To help the school improve yet further we have asked for two developments:

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- to bring more teaching up to the quality of the very best
- to encourage you to develop more ideas for yourself. Too many of you rely upon your teachers instead of trying to make discoveries for yourself. Try it. You will find it exciting.

Yours sincerely

Michael Shaw

Lead inspector