

Welland Park Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120246
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327241
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Joyce HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	692
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	38
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hunt
Headteacher	Pascale Powell
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	7 January 2008
Date of previous childcare inspection	7 January 2008
School address	Welland Park Road Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 9DR
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 28 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of school documentation, including whole-school policies, improvement plans, current student performance data and minutes from governing body meetings. They also analysed 122 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of teaching in challenging and supporting students of different ability levels
- the contribution of the specialist technology status to the overall quality of education provided
- the effectiveness of guidance and support in preparing students for transition to upper school
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

Welland Park Community College is a smaller-than-average school. Very few students are eligible for free school meals. The majority of students speak English as their first language and very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs are broadly average. An extensive child care, youth, community and adult education programme, managed by the school, operates on the school site. The school is designated as a specialist technology college, has been successfully re-accredited as both a Healthy School and an Investor in People and has gained Artsmark and Sports Award accreditation.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school with an outstanding Early Years Foundation Stage. The school serves its students and the local community particularly well. It is a friendly, harmonious and well-ordered school where relationships are excellent. Staff and students have mutual respect for one another. Expectations are high and leaders, governors and staff demonstrate an unrelenting drive to make the school even better. Displays of high-quality student work throughout the school and in the early years centre create an exceptional learning environment where students feel extremely safe. As well as ensuring students make good progress and achieve high standards the school is rightly focused on ensuring students enjoy their learning. An outstanding curriculum, including an impressive range of extra-curricular activities, ensures students develop as well-rounded individuals.

The rich and varied curriculum enables students to learn about the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and to develop a wide range of skills that prepare students very effectively for both their transition to upper school and for the world of work. The specialist technology status has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of education provided and increasing the curriculum activities available. Attendance levels are high and students are punctual for lessons. Behaviour is good overall and in many cases exemplary, especially during lessons where students are actively participating in learning.

Teaching and learning are good overall and inspectors observed several outstanding lessons. Typically teachers are thoroughly prepared for lessons and many use an impressive range of different activities to ensure students' individual needs are met. Students enjoy their lessons and appreciate the support provided by teachers. However, in a small minority of lessons, although satisfactory, teachers do not allow students to contribute to their own learning sufficiently and too little attention is paid to meeting the full range of individual students' needs. In some lessons information and communication technology (ICT) is not used to its full potential. Marking and assessment are used well to aid students' progress although this practice is not consistent throughout the school.

Care, support and guidance are outstanding and enable students to make informed decisions about their future. Students are known as individuals and have confidence in the advice and guidance provided by staff. Transition arrangements to prepare students in Year 9 for their move to the local upper school are outstanding.

Transition mentoring arrangements are particularly effective and valued by students.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and how it needs to develop further. The school has built on the strengths identified at the last inspection and successfully addressed the areas identified as requiring improvement. Staff have confidence in their managers and are supported extremely well with a variety of appropriate training and development opportunities. These features, together with the excellent partnership working, including the engagement of parents and carers, give the school an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share best practice in marking and assessment to ensure greater consistency between subjects in aiding student progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all teachers plan lessons to take account of the full range of students' individual needs and ability levels
 - students are able to take responsibility for their own learning in all lessons
 - greater use is made of ICT as a learning tool throughout the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment levels are exceptionally and consistently high in all subjects. Students make good progress based on their starting points with many making outstanding progress. Attainment levels in English, mathematics and science are consistently well above national averages. Students enjoy their learning, they are well motivated and their achievement is outstanding. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent support and achieve as well as their peers. There is no significant variation in the progress between any different groups of students.

Students are well informed about the need to lead healthy lifestyles and have an excellent understanding about the dangers associated with smoking and drug use. Many students choose to eat healthily from the exceptional range of nutritiously balanced food available within school. The physical education curriculum together with the wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities enables a very high proportion of students to take regular exercise.

Students are actively involved in many activities that provide excellent links with the local community. Recent musical performances have been particularly successful and these enable students to demonstrate their considerable performance skills. Students care about their school and local community and are keen to volunteer, to raise money for charity and to influence the decision-making processes within school. The school council is active and students feel their views are valued although the school recognises the need to further develop the student voice.

The extensive curriculum and good teaching enables students to develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being exceptionally

well. Standards of literacy, numeracy and computing skills are very high. A highly effective personal development programme enables students to develop a broad range of skills including communication, team working and financial awareness.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

High-quality teaching ensures students are challenged and inspired. Teachers know their subjects well and most motivate and engage students in a wide range of memorable activities. The exceptional curriculum, especially in subjects within the technology specialism, provides students with excellent opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. Students benefit from the varied range of academic, vocational and creative subjects offered and from the extensive choice of extra-curricular activities. The well-considered personal, social and health education programme, together with the impressive number of guest speakers, trips and visits, significantly enhances students' learning and enjoyment.

Students speak highly about the quality of teaching and the valuable help and support they receive from staff. Teachers use information extremely effectively to set challenging targets for students and progress is frequently monitored. Assessment is used very effectively to support learning in the majority of subjects although practice does vary. In some instances marking and assessment does not detail sufficiently what students need to do to improve. In a small minority of less successful lessons teachers do not use a sufficient variety of resources to meet the full range of individual students' needs. In some lessons teachers do not enable students to take an active enough role in their learning or use ICT to its full potential.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Excellent monitoring and evaluation arrangements have enabled the school to improve rapidly. All aspects of provision are effectively monitored and action plans to drive further improvement are very detailed. The principal, well supported by senior leaders, provides inspirational leadership and communicates ambition clearly and effectively. Senior leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and support middle managers well. Staff work effectively as part of a team and staff morale is high.

Partnership working is a key strength of the school and of particular note is the effectiveness of partnering arrangements with feeder primary schools and the excellent links established with the main upper school. Links with community partners and with external agencies to support student well-being and development are excellent. Engagement with parents and carers is highly effective. Frequent newsletters, parents' evenings, reports and communications enable parents to be fully involved in the life of the school and in their child's education.

Governors are very supportive of the school and are becoming increasingly more effective in providing challenge. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements and risk assessments are comprehensive. The school has appropriate policies and procedures for ensuring equality of opportunity and monitors student data by ethnicity, gender and disability. Ensuring equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work. Community cohesion is well promoted. Students have a good understanding of community cohesion in relation to the school community and the community within which the school is located. The school works well with the local community and plays a full and active role in many beneficial partnerships. However, students do not have a sufficient understanding of the different customs, values and beliefs of international communities, although the school is developing links to heighten awareness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress and achieve exceptionally well in all areas of learning. They are confident, curious and independent learners and their behaviour and social skills are excellent. Children were observed carrying out a range of activities that developed their language and mathematical skills exceptionally well. By the time children move on to school the majority write their names independently and accurately. Their counting skills are excellent with many counting beyond 20. Children share toys willingly and take turns on the computer. They use the toilet independently and wash their hands afterwards without being prompted.

Planning and assessment of children's learning and development are outstanding. Excellent and immediate use is made of assessment to raise children's achievement. Learning records are used very effectively to track children's progress and demonstrate their outstanding achievement. Children flow freely and naturally from indoor to outdoor activities. They enjoy learning through painting, listening to stories and through initiating their own play. The outside garden is used very effectively for children to explore and make discoveries about the world around them as well as for physical activity such as climbing and skipping.

Very effective policies and management systems are in place to ensure that children are safe and secure. At the time of the inspection child protection procedures met government requirements. Risk assessments are thorough and detailed. Toys are checked regularly and broken ones are thrown away immediately. The outdoor play area is checked at the start of each session and the sand pit and water tray are regularly cleaned. Children are exceptionally well cared for and partnerships with parents are excellent.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are very supportive of the school and all it does for their children. One parent commented, 'We are very pleased with this school. There is an excellent mix of academic, social and creative opportunities,' and another commented, 'Excellent in all areas – we have been extremely happy with the school.' The sentiment in these comments was echoed by almost all parents and

inspection evidence supports these views. Inspectors did not find evidence to support the very few negative responses received.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Welland Park Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 122 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 692 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	93	29	0	0

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
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.



19 June 2009

Dear Students

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

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the outcome of the inspection. Before I do, I would like to thank you all for your help during our visit. We found what you had to say very helpful in making our judgements about the school.

We were pleased to hear so many of you enjoy going to school. Many of you told us how friendly and helpful your staff are and how much you enjoy the range of subjects you study. We were pleased to see so many of you willingly take part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available and were impressed with the knowledge and skills that you have. It was clear that most of you are rightly very proud of your school.

We found your school to be an outstanding school that enables you to make good progress and achieve high standards. The curriculum is rich and varied allowing you to develop well as young people. It provides you with many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. Your teachers are helpful and supportive and most make your lessons interesting by involving you in learning. The care, guidance and support you receive are excellent and you are well prepared for the future.

During our inspection, we identified some aspects where the school could improve further. As a result, we have asked the school to:

- use marking and assessment consistently in all subjects to help you make even better progress
- make the already good teaching you receive even better by ensuring all teachers plan lessons to meet your individual needs.

The principal and school staff are already working hard to improve these areas and they have an excellent understanding of what needs to be done. You can help them by continuing to concentrate and work hard in all of your lessons. We wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Joyce
Her Majesty's Inspector

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