



The Ecclesbourne School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112986
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279071
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Dr. Tony Beaver

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Wirksworth Road
School category	Foundation		DE56 4GS
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01332840645
Number on roll	1431	Fax number	01332841871
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.Keith Wharam
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Lesley Underhill

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 7 November 2005 - 8 November 2005	Inspection number 279071
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ecclesbourne School is located in Duffield, near to Derby. It is a popular, large, mixed 11 to 18 comprehensive foundation school with a larger than average sixth form. It has been a specialist Technology College since 2001, and has Leading Edge status. Almost all pupils have White British backgrounds. Few come from homes experiencing economic hardship; below average numbers are eligible for free school meals. In the last full academic year, 8% of pupils were on the school's register of special educational needs (SEN), including statements of SEN. Few pupils leave or join the school other than at ages 11 or 16.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Ecclesbourne School has just cause to judge itself as outstandingly effective. Students make good progress to reach exceptionally high academic standards. The school serves its community very well and has successful links with a wide range of agencies and commercial organisations, which enhance students' educational opportunities and well-being. It is, justifiably, highly popular with students and parents because it helps them realise their aspirations extremely well. The school cares exceptionally well for its students. They are helped to lead healthy lifestyles, feel safe and enjoy their education. Their relationships and behaviour are often exemplary. Most teaching is good. The system of target setting to help students to direct their work to best effect is not yet fully effective. Students have excellent opportunities to follow programmes of learning most suited to their needs. However, the school cannot give them the opportunity for an act of collective worship every day. The school is outstandingly well led and managed. The headteacher has taken the school further forward, and standards that are already high continue to rise. The governing body is an active partner in supporting and improving the school's work. The school's modest income yields high standards and an impressive quality of education. The value for money is outstanding. Since the last inspection, it has, with just cause, gained increased national recognition for high academic standards. It has much improved the accommodation, become a specialist school for technology and gained Leading Edge status. Leaders and managers are determined to improve the school even more and have powerful capacity to do so.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The school correctly considers the effectiveness of the sixth form to be outstanding. Students make excellent progress and reach exceptionally high standards because of the high quality of the specialist teaching they receive. The curriculum offers a wide range of advanced courses, tailored to individual needs. These are complemented by the excellent opportunities for enrichment and personal development, which are eagerly taken up by the students. Their mature attitudes to learning are exemplary, and almost all complete the courses they begin. Leadership and management of the sixth form are highly effective and ensure clear direction.

Grade: 1

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure the system for setting, monitoring and reviewing targets for individual

students is applied consistently and effectively. - Bring all teaching and learning into line with the school's best practice.

Achievement and standards

Academic standards in all parts of the school are outstanding and the progress made by pupils is good. The school meets its challenging targets. Students' starting points in Year 7 are typically well above average. They make good progress in English, mathematics and science and reach exceptionally high standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. Results in English and mathematics were the highest in Derbyshire for three consecutive years, from 2002 to 2004. As a result of the long-term illness of key staff, standards in tests in science fell below expectation in 2004. However, standards rose steeply again in the 2005 tests. The standards that students attain in public examinations at the end of Year 11 are consistently high. Students from all backgrounds make good progress and achieve well. Those who have learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because of the excellent provision the school makes for their needs. Students' standards in the 2004 and 2005 examinations were exceptionally high, as was the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examination A* to C grades. Gifted pupils achieve outstanding individual success, and the percentage of top grades (A* and A) is very high. Students enter the sixth form with above average standards of attainment. They make excellent progress, because of the outstanding teaching and guidance they receive. From 2002 to 2005, advanced level examination results were exceptionally good. Students gained an increasingly high proportion of top grades. Over the last five years, 56 students have gained places at Oxford or Cambridge Universities.

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students are proud of their school and most take full advantage of the many opportunities given to them to develop as people and to make progress in their work. An outstanding example of this is the sixth form debating society, where confident and articulate students present well prepared and reasoned arguments to their peers. Students enjoy school as shown by their outstanding attendance and positive attitudes towards teachers and learning. The behaviour of most students is excellent in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes. Students feel safe in school and express confidence in their teachers' prompt and effective responses to the few instances of bullying. Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and they are prepared very well for life after school. As soon as they enter the school, students show they value

the opportunities to learn new skills, for example, representing their year groups as young leaders on the school council. The attendance of sixth form school council members at a monthly senior leadership meeting and at governors' meetings ensures that the student voice is heard. Students have been instrumental in the provision of more healthy eating choices. They lend tremendous enthusiasm and support to the house system, which gives them every opportunity to participate and feel valued. They show concern and empathise with those who are suffering, as shown in a Year 11 assembly. Year 10 students have put care into action by sponsoring a 6-year- old Vietnamese boy to try to provide him with some of the life advantages that they have.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, and outstanding in the sixth form. Relationships among staff and students are excellent. Lessons are well prepared and involve and engage students well, including those with a range of SEN. Work builds well on what they have learned previously. The investment in interactive whiteboards for many classrooms has led to effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. Students respond enthusiastically to their teachers' high expectations and there is a great thirst for knowledge. While most work is well matched to the needs and abilities of students, this is not always the case in the all-ability classes in Key Stage 3. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and especially so in the sixth form. Where teaching is exceptional, staff have the highest expectations of their students and extend their learning rapidly through highly challenging work. In the sixth form, students use their very well developed thinking skills to reason, as in an exemplary philosophical debate. Where lessons are less successful, but satisfactory, the pace of learning is not always brisk enough, and not enough attention is given to students who are not sufficiently focused on learning. The marking of students' work is of inconsistent quality, and not enough advice is given to help pupils improve.

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Curriculum and other activities

This is outstanding. Good provision for the required subjects is made, but in addition, very strong emphasis is placed on thinking skills and the use and application of basic skills and ICT across the curriculum. Students have good opportunities to accelerate their learning. Flexible approaches are made and the

curriculum is outstandingly well adapted for students with learning difficulties. At Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form the curriculum is successfully based on, and planned from, students' individual needs and interests. The programme has been extended to include vocational subjects such as engineering and leisure and tourism. The school's Leading Edge status has significantly supported curricular development. There is an extensive taught programme of personal development and citizenship which includes effective work-related learning and excellent careers guidance. Opportunities for students to learn outside lessons are outstanding; the take-up by students is very high. Visits and visitors considerably enhance students' opportunities.

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. Staff are exceptionally effective in providing a supportive and caring environment in which students become confident, mature and independent learners. Provision for health and safety is outstanding overall, although in science the safe storage of chemicals is inadequate. Child protection procedures are very well established. Outstanding support from staff in the Enhanced Learning Faculty for students who have learning difficulties, and for those who are vulnerable, enables them to achieve very well. Strong links with parents and outside agencies further enhance provision for these students. Support for gifted and talented pupils is excellent, with innovative programmes to meet their needs. Careers guidance is extremely well provided, and greatly appreciated by students. Comprehensive new arrangements are in place to monitor students' progress and effort. Annual reports to parents are very informative. Use of data to track progress is improving. The setting, monitoring and reviewing of targets for individuals is improving, but not yet fully consistent and effective.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Outstanding leadership and management show a shrewd understanding of the quality of the school's performance. The headteacher communicates clear vision for the school's further development and for the maintenance of high standards in all aspects of its work. There is no complacency in this highly successful school. The school works purposefully with outside agencies to ensure all students have equal access to educational opportunities and to ensure all needs are met, including those of students with SEN. Parents and the school's other partners have justifiable confidence in the school's purposeful ethos which expects students to aspire to their highest standards and act very responsibly. They respond in the right spirit.

Monitoring and evaluation ensure that standards are high. Actions taken by leaders and managers ensure that teaching is good overall and excellent in the sixth form. Managers ensure that students are exceptionally well cared for and have valuable guidance in making educational and life choices. However, the system of targets to help each student to improve is not yet used consistently and effectively enough. Management adapts the curriculum exceptionally well to meet individual needs. Teaching and support staff show their commitment to the students by the excellent range of activities they put on to enrich students' learning beyond the classroom. Governors understand fully the school's strengths and work closely with the headteacher to maintain high levels of performance. They have overseen many material improvements, not least in the equipment for learning and the accommodation, although much remains to be done, especially for sport and music. Since its last inspection, this outstanding school has become a specialist in technology and is one of a small number across the country with Leading Edge status. Leaders and managers have the skills and resolution necessary to improve even further on the high standards attained.

Grade: 1

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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?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
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	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	1
The behaviour of learners	2	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	1
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

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?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

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

The inspection team greatly enjoyed visiting Ecclesbourne; we thank you all for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. You are right to think highly of your school and to enjoy learning there. It is one of only a few schools in the whole country that is of outstanding quality. We particularly noted the high standards you reach, how well you behave, the very good relationships you enjoy, and your mature attitudes to learning. Your school takes excellent care of you, but further development of the target-setting system would help you make even more rapid progress. As you move through the school, you get impressive opportunities to learn the subjects that interest you. You get a brilliant range of extra-curricular opportunities, in which the vast majority of you participate. Your teachers do a good job, and some are outstanding professionals. However, not all teaching and learning are yet in line with the school's best practice. We agree with you that your school is exceptionally well led and managed, from the headteacher onwards. We wish you every success, and we feel sure that if you continue to put in the hard work you know is needed, you should achieve your very best at Ecclesbourne.