



Edensor Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 124382
 Local Authority Stoke-On-Trent
 Inspection number 298622
 Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
 Reporting inspector Brian Cartwright HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Greendock Street
School category	Community		Longton
Age range of pupils	11–16		Stoke-on-Trent
			ST3 2NA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01782 233933
Number on roll (school)	1066	Fax number	01782 233926
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Keith Pritchard
		Headteacher	Mr Richard Mercer
Date of previous school inspection	March 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection no.
11–16	18–19 October 2006	298622

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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

This large, urban specialist technology college receives students from the local area that has generally higher than average indicators of socio-economic disadvantage. There is an average proportion of minority ethnic students, mainly of Pakistani heritage, but a slightly higher proportion whose first language is not English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is average, although the numbers with statements of special educational need is slightly above the national average. There are seven students in the care of the local authority. Student attainment on entry fluctuates over time but is lower than average. Virtually all students start in Year 7 and leave in Year 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school Grade: 3

Edensor Technology College is providing a satisfactory quality of education. Students feel safe, are well looked after and enjoy good working relationships with staff. The staff are fully committed to doing their best for students and work hard on their students' success. Students behave well and very much enjoy lessons that are active and well matched to their learning needs. They have many opportunities to extend their learning in after school clubs and trips to local and international places.

Standards and achievement are satisfactory, although attainment remains below average at both Key Stages 3 and 4. Teaching is satisfactory. Some is good or better, but there is inconsistency of practice within and between departments. The better teaching ensures every student is working to the best of their capability, which they enjoy. Students' personal development is satisfactory. They are being reasonably well prepared for adult life, in terms of healthy eating, active lifestyles and basic skills. There is insufficient opportunity for students to develop their understanding of each other's beliefs and traditions because of inadequate provision for religious education at Key Stage 4 and inconsistent use of morning tutor/assembly time. The school involves students in its own and the local community and has done well in raising their aspirations. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. The school cares well for the young people in its charge, including vulnerable students. All learners have equal access to the satisfactory curriculum, and the school works well at including vulnerable learners and those at risk of disaffection. There have been some limitations on curriculum choices at Key Stage 4 in previous years.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has made reasonable improvements since the previous inspection, and in some areas, for example design and technology, demonstrated significant gains. GCSE English achievement is another area of success. However, monitoring and evaluation by leaders and managers have not been effective enough at dealing with persistent weaknesses and therefore significant variations in the achievement of students and between different subjects remain. Development planning has been variable in quality. This is being rectified now but again the pace of intervention has sometimes been too slow. Governance is satisfactory, but some statutory requirements remain unmet. The school has met its design and technology subject performance target but continues to fall short of many of its overall performance targets, despite welcome improvements in some.

Specialist school status is making an adequate impact on raising standards. It is leading to dissemination of good teaching and assessment practice to other subjects, and standards in design and technology have continued to rise. In particular, systematic celebration of success in technology is helping to raise students' self-esteem, which impacts well on their good achievement in design and technology.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure swift action is taken to address identified weaknesses and shortfalls in provision, leading to consistent achievement for all.
- Implement statutory curriculum requirements and improve the impact of tutor time and assemblies.
- Ensure existing good teaching practice is shared across all subject areas, beginning with consistent lesson planning that ensures each student receives an appropriately challenging activity.
- Students already achieve well in many subjects; ensure that all the school's community understands that this can and should be the case for all.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school has accurately evaluated achievement and standards to be satisfactory. The standards in 2006 national tests at Key Stage 3 are below national averages, but have slightly improved compared with 2005 thanks to gains in mathematics and science. Students make adequate progress through Key Stage 3, with no major variation between groups of learners.

Standards gained by students at Key Stage 4 in 2006 were slightly better than 2005, but the school was right to be disappointed at not reaching its targets. The results look to be below the national averages again, but not exceptionally so. Performance varies considerably between subjects, and this wide inconsistency is, on the one hand, a positive indication of how well these students can achieve, for example in design and technology where over 55% of students attained A*–C grades. However, it is also evidence of long-standing weaknesses in other subjects, for example in science where only 24% of the same students gained an A*–C grade. Measures of progress in recent years have shown satisfactory achievement by the majority of students, with no significant variation between different groups of learners. There is, however, wider than normal variation between individual students; some achieving very much better results than predicted, but others not completing all of their courses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Students behave well and adopt safe practices in lessons and around the school. School staff are approachable and vigilant in encouraging good behaviour. This contributes to creating a calm and orderly school community where students feel safe and enjoy their time here. Exclusion figures are low, thanks to successful strategies to manage students at risk of exclusion.

Students adopt adequately healthy lifestyles through attendance at a range of extra activities after school and through sensible lunchtime meal choices.

Attendance remains satisfactory despite a decline last year. Punctuality to school is good.

Students make satisfactory gains in skills that will contribute to securing their future economic well-being but many students lack confidence. Basic skills in English and numeracy are too low for some students. Nevertheless, the aspirations of students are rising, with many aiming to gain higher education or vocational qualifications in the years to come. Most students find placements in further education or employment when they leave school.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is adequate overall but there is not a consistent whole-school approach to providing opportunities to enhance this aspect. For example, assemblies are few and, together with form time, contribute little to students' ability to think beyond themselves and recognise the part they can play in the world beyond the school. Indeed a few students perceive there to be occasional low-level racial tension in school, although recognised that the school does deal well with such issues when it knows about them. They choose to socialise in separate gender and ethnic groups rather than mixing together.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with a full range of teaching quality evident during the inspection. Teaching is generally making it clear to students what they should learn in a lesson and this results in them learning at an acceptable rate. Teachers' expectations of what students should achieve are inconsistent. In the best lessons, expectations are demanding yet attainable, resulting in students relishing the challenge, but more often this is not the case. Only in the best lessons are the highest achieving students challenged to the full. Most work is marked at least to a satisfactory standard, but there are a few classes with little evidence of any marking. In most lessons, students know what standard they are currently working at and what grades they should be aiming for. They would achieve more with clearer, more detailed information on how to improve their work. Examples of excellent diagnosis of needs exist; for example, a textiles lesson was explicitly teaching students how to be more creative with their designs because the teacher had spotted their weaknesses the week before.

Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by teachers in most lessons to further students' understanding. Students respond well to opportunities to take charge of their own learning, for example in the way a mathematics class was being introduced to simultaneous equations. There are, however, insufficient of these opportunities for students to develop the skill of working independently. Learning support assistants adequately support students but do not always quickly identify when and how to intervene.

Curriculum and other activities**Grade: 3**

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been extended to include drama and study skills. Vocational learning is an established part of Key Stage 4, and the school is now allowing more flexible choices to better meet the needs of the full ability range. All students study technology and benefit from this good provision, which has developed as part of the school's specialist college initiative. GCSE physical education is compulsory for all, but standards reached are well below those achieved by the same students in most other subjects. Insufficient time is given to citizenship education and the school does not provide the statutory religious education at Key Stage 4. The school enables some students to follow specialist vocational courses at further education colleges.

The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities is satisfactory. A good proportion of students take part in after school provision and several come in on Saturdays to work on computers. There is a good programme of trips and visits both locally and around the world.

Care, guidance and support**Grade: 3**

The school provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for students. This includes those who have learning difficulties and disabilities and students identified as gifted and able. Supportive staff know their students very well and help them to progress in their work and develop personal skills. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are adequate, but students are not extensively involved in their own assessment or target setting. Several parents expressed a concern that the school did not give them enough information about their children's progress.

The school has introduced a system of assessing and monitoring individual students' performance in detail and linking it to pastoral support. Where groups or individuals are identified as underachieving, intervention action is taken which has been successful in bringing about improvement. Students say they feel safe and secure, and that any instances of bullying or bad behaviour are dealt with. Students are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles but some ignore this advice. Risk assessments are complete and appropriate safeguarding checks take place. The school provides good information about choices of courses and careers. The school has developed good links with primary schools. Its links with other institutions also enhance care and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leaders and managers at all levels share a strong commitment to supporting and developing youngsters at the college, and readily commit to its 'Education for Life' motto. There have been changes and reorganisation of major aspects of the management, in particular a clearer role for academic support through new learning mentors. Parents have opportunities to respond to surveys, as do students via formal attitude surveys in Years 7 and 10. The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses but does not always respond quickly enough to this information. For example, differences in the quality of teaching and learning between and within departments are known, but inconsistencies persist and result in wide variation of students' performance. The quality of current departmental plans varies significantly, suggesting weaknesses in the consistency of senior managers' quality assurance of these plans, and the subsequent risk that desired improvements will not occur. Nevertheless, many middle managers are thriving, with effective curriculum delivery in place to ensure students enjoy learning and achieve well in their subject. Some initiatives have worked very well, for example intervention programmes at Key Stage 3, and the successes in design and technology supported by specialist school status. These specific examples indicate a satisfactory capacity to improve, but the pace of development needs accelerating.

Governors are developing strategies to get better information about subject performance, but presently rely on presentations from key staff and a regular, good quality headteacher's report. They do not systematically evaluate the school's performance. The school has been slow to fully establish statutory policies. The Key Stage 4 curriculum still does not meet statutory requirements for religious education, and the arrangements to manage the lack of a daily act of collective worship are inadequate. Coupled with inconsistent subject performance this variable improvement since the previous inspection indicates inadequate effectiveness of the school's performance monitoring. The school provides adequate value for money.

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Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

¹ 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.

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



20 October 2006

Dear Students

Edensor Technology College, Greendock Street, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, ST3 2NA

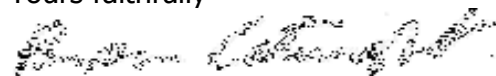
Thank you for your time and patience as you talked with us about your school. We enjoyed our visit and were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and consideration towards one another, and your teachers and support staff. They work very hard to make sure you are well cared for and, as a result, you feel safe and secure at school.

The school is providing you all with a sound education and, as a result, you are making the progress we would expect, overall. In some subjects you achieve really good results and obviously enjoy studying them. We think you are capable of doing just as well in all your subjects. The school offers a wide range of courses, with lots of opportunities for activities after school and plenty of trips and visits at home and abroad. It does not deliver the religious education required in Key Stage 4, and the way options have worked in the past have restricted choice for some of you. The school is changing how it sorts out your choices. We also recognise that there are a few occasions where some of you are troubled by unpleasant comments, but also appreciate that the school deals effectively with these incidents when it knows about them. You should make sure the school knows!

We have asked the school to do more to ensure that the best teaching, of which there are many examples, is happening in every classroom. We expect you all to be taught religious education at Key Stage 4, and make better use of tutor time and assemblies to understand your own, and others', beliefs and values. We also want you all to be confident in your talents and skills, and your ability to achieve very well, because you are doing so already in many subjects.

With best wishes for your future success.

Yours faithfully



Brian Cartwright
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools