

Manor High School (Foundation)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104021
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	323944
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	David Cox

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	737
Sixth form	124
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Maull
Headteacher	Miriam Mole
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2006
School address	Friar Park Road Wednesbury WS10 0JS
Telephone number	01215 562858
Fax number	01215 053150

Age group	11–19
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
Inspection number	323944

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Manor Foundation Business, Enterprise and Sports College is a smaller than average secondary school. The school has specialist status in sports as well as business and enterprise. Most students are from White British backgrounds although there has been a significant influx of students in recent years from Eastern Europe. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is high, as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has had difficulty in recruiting key staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Manor Foundation Business, Enterprise and Sports College provides its students with a satisfactory education. Provision in the sixth form is a particular strength. Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are well below average by the end of Year 11. A greater proportion of students now leave school with GCSE and/or work-related qualifications because of a more relevant curriculum, but the proportion who attain the highest grades in English and mathematics remains well below average.

An active range of school councils presents their views to senior staff and governors on a regular basis. Students feel they are safe in school. Of the small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire, around half expressed concerns about behaviour. However, inspectors found behaviour to be at least satisfactory in most lessons and often exemplary in the sixth form, and the school continues to challenge the minority of students who behave inappropriately towards others or misbehave in lessons or around the school. The school is working hard to improve attendance, particularly for those who are persistent poor attenders. However, despite gains last year, attendance remains below average. The school's specialist status in sports is having a positive impact within both the school and the local community. The school is a national centre for netball and is extensively used by Walsall Netball Association. Students have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles, with a number achieving the higher level Sports Leadership award. Successful charity events are run annually to support local, national and international appeals. Through myriad business and enterprise activities, students develop a good understanding of how commerce operates. However, students' weak basic skills, especially in literacy, hinder their preparation for life beyond school.

Students have engaged well with work-related courses and appreciate the greater relevance of this provision in their longer-term plans. As a result, students find school more interesting and enjoyable. The school acknowledges that it does not focus enough on developing literacy skills across the curriculum.

The quality of teaching is improving but is also satisfactory overall. There is some outstanding teaching, for example in design and technology, and humanities, where students are challenged to do their best. However, the use of assessment data to support lesson planning and match work to the needs of all students is inconsistent. There is also no consistent approach within lessons to improving students' literacy skills. Strong links established with a number of outside agencies ensure a good level of care, particularly for the most vulnerable students.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's view of its strengths and weaknesses is fairly accurate, arising from detailed self-evaluation. However, whilst leaders are involved in monitoring the work of the school, they do not always ensure school policies are applied consistently. There have been a number of useful initiatives but the pace of change has been slowed unavoidably by long-term staff absence and difficulty recruiting key staff. Senior leaders with responsibility for specialist status business and enterprise, and sport have successfully introduced curricular innovation in these areas, which has resulted in a significant rise in the number of students gaining vocational qualifications. Governors are increasingly offering support to the school whilst challenging it to do even better. In recent years, the school has set challenging targets for improvement that have often been exceeded; however, the school is fully aware that they are not high enough in English and mathematics to ensure that standards rise. Successful actions to improve attendance, behaviour and the rise in the proportion of

students leaving school with more relevant qualifications are indicative of a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Standards in the sixth form are above average and students achieve well. Teachers have strengthened their focus on the quality of teaching and learning so that it is now good. At its best, carefully pitched and well-paced teaching engages students and the detailed assessment of their work highlights points for improvement. Students are good role models and ambassadors for the school. They rise to the challenge of leading initiatives both inside and outside the school. Students are supportive of the sixth form leadership and are playing an increasingly prevalent role in the ethos and spirit of the school's community.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and a clear strength of the school. The head of sixth form has successfully restructured the sixth form, improved systems and strengthened management in both pastoral and teaching elements. This has been a strong factor in the increase in the number of students staying on and has helped to enhance students' achievement significantly.

The care, guidance and support given to sixth form students are good and contribute effectively to their good personal development and well-being. Students receive good pastoral guidance from tutors who often have known them throughout their school career. They speak highly of the support they receive and they appreciate the ready access to personal help and support from responsible adults. This raises their confidence and self-esteem and encourages many to work towards a future in higher education even where there is no such family tradition. There are strong links with external agencies as well as accessibility to courses from other further education providers through compatible timetabling. Transition and induction arrangements for Year 12 students are good and enable students to settle into the new academic environment quickly. The needs of the influx of Eastern European students have been addressed effectively with supportive English classes. New systems for the tracking of students' progress are not yet embedded fully as a curriculum-wide practice and so their value is not fully appreciated by the students.

The sixth form curriculum has been restructured following a comprehensive review and is now good, with new courses proving popular. As a result, there has been a significant growth in the size of the Year 12 intake and enhanced retention thereafter. Students benefit greatly from a dynamic programme of enrichment courses, most of which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. There is also a good range of sporting opportunities and trips out of school, which the students greatly value.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Increase the proportion of students achieving the highest grades at GCSE in English and mathematics.
- Ensure there is a stronger focus on improving students' literacy skills.
- Ensure those students who have persistently poor attendance attend school on a more regular basis.
- Ensure that all leaders implement whole-school policies and initiatives consistently.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When students start school, their skills and knowledge are well below the expected level for 11-year-olds, with many displaying poor literacy skills. Students' achievement is satisfactory and, by the time they leave school at the end of Year 11, standards of attainment overall are well below average. The school has been slow to introduce major curriculum change in order to improve standards of literacy in Years 7 to 9, where many students struggle with the basic skills of writing and reading. Because there is now a greater focus on improving basic skills in Years 10 and 11, almost all students leave school with GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics or equivalent literacy and numeracy qualifications. An increasing number of students leave the school with vocational and work-related qualifications. Specialist sports and business and enterprise status has brought about a significant improvement in examination results in these subjects. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. The progress of those students with Eastern European backgrounds is mixed. The school was initially taken aback by the sharp increase in their numbers in recent years, and although focused one-to-one support enables them to make good initial progress with their English language skills, their progress slows because some class teachers do not always plan work to meet their specific needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Behaviour is satisfactory overall and students are generally friendly and helpful. Students say they feel safe and that there are lots of adults they can turn to for help or advice if needed. However, they also comment that poor behaviour sometimes affects their enjoyment of school and disrupts lessons. Recently, improved systems for managing behaviour have reduced the number of fixed-term exclusions. Despite this, the number of exclusions remains high. Although recent action taken by the school has resulted in an improvement in attendance, it is still below average and remains an area for concern. Students say, however, that they enjoy coming to school. Students are aware of the importance of healthy eating and many adopt active lifestyles through the wide array of activities provided through being a specialist sports college. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school's good links with schools at home and abroad ensure students are aware of religions and cultures that are different from their own. They are aware of the diversity of cultures within Britain. They make a good contribution to the local community, for example through their work as sports leaders in local primary schools. They raise money for charities and are happy to take responsibility within the school as school and community councillors, organising events such as the 'prom'. Business and enterprise status boosts students' understanding of the world of work, but it is undermined by their low-level literacy skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The proportion of lessons in which students make good progress has increased. Strategies for improving students' attitudes to learning are having a positive impact on progress, particularly in vocational subjects, where students are taking greater responsibility for their own learning. In a minority of lessons, outstanding teaching challenges students of all abilities to make rapid progress, and they are provided with opportunities to think for themselves and to cooperate effectively with others. However, although the quality of teaching has improved, there is still inconsistent practice both within and across subjects. At times, work is not matched sufficiently to support and challenge different groups of students. Not enough emphasis is placed on improving weak literacy skills. Teachers make too little use of assessment to adjust or refine their approach, and some are often content to rely on a small minority to answer questions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has worked hard to extend and personalise the curriculum and there is now a more relevant range of subjects on offer to students in Years 10 and 11. There are many opportunities for these students to follow vocational courses, both in school and through consortium arrangements. For example, the school has a very good on-site hair salon facility that is used by older students following higher-level vocational qualifications.

Specialist status funding has enabled the school to make enhanced provision in business studies and sport, leading to successful examination results and greater opportunities to develop business and leadership skills. Older students are able to train as higher-level sports leaders and reading mentors and work hard to support younger students in the school and in local primary schools.

Provision for improving students' weak literacy skills is not rigorous enough. Curricular planning within subjects does not always take account of how these skills may be developed. In German classes, there is a strong emphasis on developing students' basic literacy skills, but there are few opportunities for sharing this good practice.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good procedures to monitor and improve attendance are in place and given a high profile. They are improving attendance but it remains below average and adversely affects the learning of the students involved. Good transition arrangements with primary schools ensure students settle into the school quickly. Safeguarding procedures have been tightened and now meet statutory requirements. Students say they feel safe and can always get help if they need it. They receive helpful careers advice and guidance about option choices. The school works well with a broad range of external support agencies to promote students' well-being. Vulnerable students and those at risk of exclusion receive individual support, which enables them to cope with school and access learning. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective one-to-one support from the various support facilities. However, teachers do not always take their needs into account when planning lessons and consequently this limits their overall progress.

Academic guidance has been strengthened recently. Students have targets, and improved marking now tells students what they have done well and suggests how to improve. However, this is not consistently in place across all teachers and subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership of the two specialist college subjects is good and curricular innovation in these areas has resulted in much improved examination results in the associated vocational courses. Whilst the systems for monitoring the work of the school are generally satisfactory, monitoring is not rigorous enough to achieve consistency in the use of assessment or the implementation of strategies to improve students' literacy skills. The school's contribution to community cohesion and promoting equality is satisfactory. Through its specialist status it works with and encourages the local community to participate in sporting activities along with promoting healthy lifestyles. Governors provide a satisfactory level of support and strategic planning. They work well with senior staff and are committed to moving the school forward.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------	-------

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	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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3	

¹Grade 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

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

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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**

2 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Manor Foundation Business, Enterprise and Sports College, Wednesbury, WS10 0JS

Thank you to those of you who spoke to us when we inspected your school. We think the school is satisfactory. You get on fine with each other and enjoy working together. It is good to see you helping the school to plan improvements through the school and community councils, and you have also contributed through the improved way you behave. You told us you feel safe, although bad behaviour still occasionally disrupts lessons. You know how to stay healthy. You are aware of other cultures in Britain and the world. Many of you now enjoy coming to school because there are more interesting courses available to you, including the many opportunities the sports, business and enterprise college provides. You enjoy visiting local colleges and universities to discover how you might further your education after leaving Manor.

The quality of teaching is improving and is satisfactory overall. This is reflected in a greater number of you leaving school with more relevant qualifications. You are cared for well and those of you who struggle with your learning receive good specialist one-to-one support. However, not all teachers support you well enough in the classroom or provide you with work that challenges you to do your best, and not enough emphasis is placed on improving your literacy skills. The school is helping you all to improve your attendance, but some of you still do not come to school regularly enough to ensure you gain good grades in English and mathematics.

Those of you who attend the sixth form achieve well and attain above average standards. This is because of the many relevant courses that are available to you. You work hard, attend well and complete your courses. You enjoy the good quality teaching and the many enrichment activities that are provided. The sixth form is continuing to improve under the good leadership of the head of sixth form.

Your headteacher is working hard to ensure you all have a better education, and although other leaders and teachers do not always ensure that the school systems are used effectively, all your staff want to make Manor even better. We have asked them to do the following things:

- ensure more of you get higher grades in English and mathematics
- ensure there is a stronger focus on improving your literacy skills
- improve attendance; you can all help by regularly attending school
- ensure that those staff who are responsible for checking how well you are doing do so more rigorously and apply the school's policies more consistently.

Finally, your school deserves your support. It is working hard to find the right courses for you in order that you can be successful and achieve well in later life.

Yours sincerely

David Cox

Lead inspector