



Old Swinford Hospital

Inspection report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 103870
 Local Authority Dudley
 Inspection number 286795
 Inspection dates 5 October 2006
 Reporting inspector Mr Tony Shield

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Heath Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Stourbridge
Age range of pupils	11–18		West Midlands DY8 1QX
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01384 817300
Number on roll (school)	339	Fax number	01384 441686
Number on roll (6th form)	264		

Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Higgs
		Headteacher	Mr M Roffe
Date of previous school inspection	5–8 November 2002		

Age group 11–18	Inspection date(s) 5 October 2006	Inspection no. 286795
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Old Swinford Hospital is a voluntary aided boarding school for boys aged 11–16 and for both boys and girls in the sixth form. Around 60% of pupils are boarders. The school is unusual in that it educates pupils both from the local area, from further afield in the UK and from abroad. Many join the school at times other than in Year 7. Although the background of most pupils is relatively advantaged, others are admitted and supported by charitable foundations to attend the school. Although the school admits 16 pupils in each year on the basis of academic ability, pupils representing the full range of ability are present. While most pupils are from a White British background, there are small minorities from other ethnic heritages. The school has business and enterprise specialist status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school Grade: 1

Old Swinford Hospital is an outstanding school with some unique and special qualities. It benefits from pupils whose attitudes and behaviour are exemplary; a leadership team ambitious for further improvement; and an ethos which encourages pupils to develop outstanding personal skills. The school educates some impressively confident young people, and offers in its own words *'No ordinary education'*.

Parents are enthusiastic in their support of the school. *'My son failed an 11+ examination but has now ended up with better GCSEs than friends who went to the grammar school. More importantly I believe the school has developed his social and team working skills so the added value has been fantastic.'*

Academically, the school sets high standards and achieves them, and results both at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are exceptionally high. Pupils' achievements are outstanding. Results in mathematics are particularly good in Key Stage 3, but performance in English and science is also strong. At GCSE, results have been consistently good for many years, and pupils do very well in most subjects. Excellent and often inspiring teaching ensures that pupils make exceptional progress. Learning is purposeful as a result of the strong work ethic throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond with determination and a pride in what they do.

The school's business and enterprise status is enhancing its work, making an increasingly important contribution in all areas of the school, encouraging productive partnerships in the community, and a good understanding amongst the pupils of the enterprise culture. The excellent curriculum is enriched by an outstanding range of well supported extra-curricular activities.

Pupils and staff get on very well with each other and an atmosphere of mutual respect characterises the school's work. Pupils' personal development is outstanding, reflected in their very positive attitudes to school, and the seriousness and enthusiasm with which they contribute to the school community. Pupils feel safe and a culture of care is woven into the fabric of the school. Above all pupils appreciate the time freely given by staff to support them, whether helping with their work or supporting the rugby team from the touchline. Although pupils know their targets, they do not always know how to achieve them, and marking and target setting sometimes fails to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do next.

The headteacher, well supported by his senior team, leads with insight and integrity. Leadership and management are excellent. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection, while the sixth form has been expanded and the school has acquired specialist status. There is no complacency and a determined quest for even higher standards is evident. The recent well

considered refinements to the school management structure and self-evaluation processes are designed to sharpen the focus on further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form Grade: 1

The school's sixth form is the jewel in the crown of the school. A level results are high and reflect the excellent progress made by students, who conduct themselves with maturity and confidence. They enjoy a well planned curriculum and an extensive range of enrichment activities. Students enjoy being in the sixth form, and rightly feel they have excellent guidance. Teaching is also excellent, scholarly and challenging. Leadership and management of the sixth form by the headteacher and his team are outstanding.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision: Grade: 1

The boarding provision makes an outstanding contribution to the personal and social development of the boarders. The last report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in March 2006 recognised that the provision offers a high standard of care. It identified no issues relating to the meeting of the national care standards, recognising the school exceeds many standards. Pupils are unequivocal that all staff care for them very well and are very friendly and approachable. Each boarding house has a unique atmosphere. They each provide pupils with a secure, safe and nurturing environment. An exceptional range of weekend and evening events, such as adventure activities, sport and a wealth of cultural experiences, provides a highly effective vehicle to develop pupils who are confident, self-assured and extremely well prepared for future challenges.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure marking and target setting enable pupils to have a better understanding of what they need to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils excel and achieve high standards at all levels. Performance in Key Stage 3 tests has been exceptionally high in recent years. Results in mathematics are particularly good with significant minorities reaching Level 8 in national tests, though performance in English and science is also very good.

Outstanding progress is maintained through Years 10 and 11, with 96% of pupils achieving five or more good grades at GCSE. Very strong performances in both English and mathematics at this stage provide a good foundation for success across a wide range of subjects, art, science and history in particular. However, pupils do well in almost all subjects. Action taken to improve

performance in geography and information and communication technology (ICT) has been successful and evident in the most recent GCSE results.

In the sixth form, results at A level are high, and students achieve very well from entry to the sixth form. They have been improving and in 2006 around two out of three grades were either A or B. For the first time in 2006, girls were entered and they did at least as well as the boys. Results in mathematics were impressive with 21 out of 40 students entered achieving an A grade, but good results were achieved in most subjects.

Personal development and well-being Grade: 1

The school provides an environment in which pupils develop into mature and thoughtful young people, developing a clear sense of their self worth. Pupils work with diligence and high levels of concentration in lessons. They enthusiastically take part in an exceptional range of enrichment activities, designed both to challenge and excite pupils. Day pupils often stay behind late at school to join in the activities arranged for boarding pupils. Pupils behave responsibly and courteously to each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils enjoy opportunities to take responsibility, for example sitting on one of the many pupil committees which help influence the way the school is run. Sixth formers in particular exercise these responsibilities with pride. The pupils' own newspaper *The Shout* with its strapline 'Make yourself heard' is an excellent medium for pupils to express their ideas. Positive relationships flourish amongst pupils and they develop the social skills and personal qualities needed for their future adult working life. Many pupils develop good financial skills and business acumen through programmes such as the Business Challenge and Young Enterprise. There is a strong community spirit amongst pupils, and they speak with pride of their contribution not just to the school itself, but also to the wider community through charitable fundraising. Sixth formers' mature and responsible behaviour is an excellent model for younger pupils.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Exceptional progress is the result of outstanding teaching. Classrooms are purposeful and pupils are alert and enthusiastic learners. Very good subject knowledge lends confidence to the teaching. Boys in Years 7–11 respond well to the competitive edge introduced into much of the learning. Most lessons are planned carefully to ensure challenge for all pupils. Questions are well used to probe and deepen understanding.

In discussion, pupils are clear that lessons where they are active learners and where their ideas and contributions are valued are the most effective lessons. A Year 7 English lesson on writing for instructions was exemplary in this respect. They are also clear that on occasions, feedback and marking are not clear about how they should improve their work. Pupils usually know what they are aiming for and how they need to improve, but this is not always the case. In the sixth form, students thrive in the tutorial style of much of the teaching, appreciating the opportunity to share their thinking and use their skills, for example to research information and draw conclusions independently of the teacher. Students feel they are stretched and made to think for themselves. They say they are never 'allowed to coast'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

All pupils have a broad range of programmes that match their needs and potential. There is also an extensive choice of subjects on offer in the sixth form, contributing to high retention rates. The school also provides a superb range of enrichment activities, visitors and visits, which pupils enthusiastically embrace. The school's business and enterprise programmes are also well considered and dovetail into the school curriculum in an increasingly effective way. Sixth form programmes in particular have been expanded to provide a richer mix of business related courses. Links with partner schools and outside agencies have also been strengthened through the school's business and enterprise activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All pupils are very well supported by the school's outstanding procedures for care and guidance. Pupils are confident that adults care about them and will help them in fulfilling their potential. Both boarding and pastoral procedures are excellent. In particular, it is the high quality of individual support provided by dedicated tutors which make the school's work in this area so distinctive. Pupils' personal and academic development is carefully tracked, although the use of progress logs could be sharpened in order to help pupils become better aware of their own learning. Academic guidance for sixth form students is outstanding. Pupils thrive in a caring and supportive environment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

A robust focus on achievement while fostering personal growth characterise the school's outstanding leadership and management. Leadership shown by the headteacher and his senior staff is principled and determined. A recent restructuring of both senior and middle management has ensured greater consistency and clarity. High expectations within a supportive environment are values shared throughout the school community.

Through regular subject audit and planning processes, all staff are able to contribute to school self-evaluation. Although the quality of these departmental reviews varies, the commitment of all staff to an honest and self-critical review is evident. As a result, senior staff and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, and they are energetic in seeking improvements. Governors offer outstanding support and challenge, meeting regularly with subject leaders to monitor their work. A range of data is analysed in order to identify areas for improvement and set challenging targets for pupils. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and their views are regularly sought.

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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	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 the Foundation Stage	NA	
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	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	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

The quality of provision

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

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	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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	



8 October 2006

Dear Pupils and Students

Old Swinford Hospital, Heath Lane, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 1QX

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were particularly impressed by the courteous way in which you greeted us and the maturity you showed in answering our questions. It is clear that you take considerable pride in being a pupil at Old Swinford Hospital, and enjoy being at the school.

Here are some of the main findings from our report:

- The school's distinctive environment provides a learning environment in which you are able to excel.
- Teachers, including those responsible for boarders, take considerable care to ensure that you are well looked after and supported through school.
- You are taught exceptionally well and, as a result, most of you are making outstanding progress.
- The sixth form offers you good opportunities to thrive and flourish.
- Many of you develop impressively confident personal and social skills, which help prepare you well for your future beyond school.
- The curriculum is excellent and there is a superb range of clubs and enrichment activities.
- The headteacher, his senior team and all other managers carry out their responsibilities exceptionally well.

Although we judge teaching to be outstandingly good overall, feedback on how well you are doing, including marking, is not always clear enough to ensure you know how to improve your work.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit. Good luck with your work in the future!

Yours faithfully

Tony Shield
Lead inspector