

Cullompton Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113502
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357372
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Andrew Redpath HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	605
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Storey
Headteacher	Amanda Farmer
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 31 lessons taught by 29 teachers, and held meetings or telephone conversations with the Chair of the Governing Body, the local authority adviser, a representative from the Devon Education Business Partnership, staff and groups of students. They observed the college's work and looked at a range of evidence including data on students' progress, students' work, teachers' planning, curriculum documents, information on the college's self-evaluation and improvement planning and minutes of meetings. The responses, in questionnaires, of 123 parents and carers, 83 students and 19 staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement of all groups of students in mathematics and science.
- The impact of initiatives to raise the achievement of boys.
- The contribution to students' learning made by the business and enterprise specialism.
- The effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior leaders to ensure consistency in teaching and learning across the college.

Information about the school

Cullompton Community College is of smaller than average size and serves the market town of Cullompton and surrounding area. Almost all students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. A higher than average proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly associated with the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills, although a few have complex physical and medical needs. The college was granted specialist status for business and enterprise in 2004. Since the last inspection there have been several changes in leadership positions and an acting headteacher has been in post since September 2010.

The college has gained several awards in recognition of its work including: Healthy School Award, Taste of the West Award, Sportsmark Award, International Schools Award and Investors in Work Related and Enterprise Learning.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Cullompton Community College provides a satisfactory and improving quality of education. It provides a high standard of care and guidance, which effectively promote students' good personal development. Students enjoy coming to the college and behave well, both in lessons and around the college.

The drive and ambition of the acting headteacher and key senior leaders are having a positive impact on raising attainment. Teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection and it is now good. Students' attainment dropped below average in the previous year, but it is currently average due to a concerted focus on improving the quality of learning in lessons.

Students make satisfactory progress overall, although there is variation between subjects. Carefully targeted strategies are improving the achievement of boys, especially in English. Imaginative topics in mathematics are capturing students' interest and pushing up standards quickly, although in science the pace of improvement is slower. In many lessons, students reflect thoughtfully on their learning by discussing their work in pairs or in small groups. There are fewer opportunities for them to develop their speaking skills by giving extended explanations to the whole class. Teachers often use assessment information well to ensure work is set at the right level for students and to check their progress. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across all subjects. In some lessons work does not always give students sufficient challenge and marking does not give detailed suggestions on how students' work might be improved.

The college uses its specialist status well to extend the curriculum which includes enterprise and preparation for work activities. The curriculum is particularly effective in ensuring students gain a good understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. This is reinforced by the very good range of extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities. The range of options available at Key Stage 4 does not always enable students to follow their interests, and links between courses of study, as students progress through the college, are not fully established.

Senior leaders evaluate the work of the college well. They have an accurate understanding of the college's strengths and areas for improvement based on the rigorous monitoring of teaching and the analysis of information to check students' progress in different subjects. The improvements in teaching and learning, the raising of standards and the shared commitment of staff across the college demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The governing body

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recognises that there are pressures on financial resources following a drop in funding and it is taking steps to resolve this. While arrangements for safeguarding students are satisfactory, governors recognise that a few health and safety procedures need to be more rigorous if safeguarding is to be good in the future. Parents and carers value the close partnership they have with the college and hold very positive views of the college's work.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Review health and safety procedures at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are as robust as possible.
- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring greater consistency across subjects in the use of assessment information and marking
 - providing more opportunities for students to develop their speaking skills and explain their ideas to the whole class.
- Strengthen the curriculum by:
 - providing a range of options that better meet the needs of students at Key Stage 4
 - establishing clearer links between the courses of study available to students as they progress through the college.
- Complete its strategic plans as soon as possible to ensure that the college is able to build its capacity for improvement within its allocated financial resources.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The proportion of students gaining five higher grade GCSEs including mathematics and English was in line with the national average in 2010, although there was a variation between students' performance in different subjects. For example, attainment was above average in English and below in mathematics and science. Data on students' current attainment and the observation of learning and progress in lessons confirm previous weaker areas are being tackled successfully and students are making satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points. A strong trend of improvement has been established following the low attainment of the previous year. The college has had a major focus on presenting more varied lessons which engage students and capture their interest. Several lessons were observed during the inspection where students were encouraged to discuss their ideas with each other and to apply their knowledge to practical situations. For example, in a mathematics lesson students used their knowledge of fractions and percentages to cost price

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changes, and in a geography lesson they discussed rich and poor areas of the world. Students enjoy their learning and their achievement is satisfactory.

Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress due to the individual or small group support they receive, especially to improve their literacy skills. Boys, and some lower attaining students, have underachieved in recent years and the college has introduced a range of strategies which are proving successful in quickening their rate of progress. For example, students in Years 10 and 11 have benefited from a good system of mentoring and academic support, some single gender classes have been set up and the content of lessons has been reviewed. As a result, the progress of boys is improving.

Students play an active part in the life of the college and wider community, for example through the tutor group representation system, school council, organising Christmas and the summer fairs and working with a local retailer to promote fair trade. The college is particularly effective in promoting students’ moral and social development, for example through the well-chosen themes in assembly. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and together with students’ secure literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills this provides students with a satisfactory preparation for future education, employment or training.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

The college provides a purposeful climate for learning. Students are well challenged and lessons successfully meet their needs; as a result, their progress and attainment are accelerating quickly. Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally use this to plan interesting lessons which move at a brisk pace. Classroom routines are well established and students routinely take responsibility for their work and for organising equipment. Teachers usually explain the purpose of lessons clearly and use questioning well to check students' understanding. Students are often involved in discussing their work with each other, although there are fewer opportunities for students to take on a leading role in their learning or to present their ideas to the whole class. Opportunities are sometimes missed to use ICT, for example interactive whiteboards, to extend learning.

The college has good systems for assessing students' work and for recording their progress. Students are often involved in assessing their own work and in discussing it with their peers. During the inspection, examples of assessment information being used particularly well to support learning were seen in English, mathematics, humanities and physical education. However, the use of assessment information to plan lessons is not consistent across all subjects and targets for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not always shared effectively between teaching assistants and teachers.

The curriculum is broad and contains an appropriate balance of academic subjects and well-structured personal, social and health education, citizenship and careers education programmes. The college has used its specialist status well to increase students' enterprise skills across the college and to prepare students for the world of work. It works closely with other partners in the Devon Education Business Partnership, local schools and colleges to extend the curriculum. The college recognises that the range of vocational courses is relatively limited and that progression routes for students as they move through the college are underdeveloped. The college provides a very wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which enrich the curriculum and are attended by a high proportion of students.

Students report that they feel safe and that the rare incidents of bullying or misbehaviour are dealt with quickly by staff. Transition arrangements for when students join and leave the college are thorough and appreciated by parents. In the words of one parent, 'My child has had a seamless transition from primary to secondary and is very happy.' The college is particularly successful in supporting students with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities. It works closely with medical staff to discuss students' individual needs and it has adapted premises and revised policies to ensure that they are included well and have good access. Some intervention programmes are not monitored closely to evaluate their full impact. Thorough procedures to manage attendance have been successful in establishing a trend of improvement in recent years.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher, key senior leaders and middle leaders share a clear commitment to raising attainment and achievement which is moving the college forward quickly. The use of challenging targets, to raise expectations, has had a positive impact on teaching and learning across the college.

The college promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. It provides an inclusive environment where students with different abilities and needs are encouraged to take part. It is aware that certain groups have made slower progress in the past and it has taken firm and successful steps to tackle this. For example, single gender groups have been established in English which are proving successful in raising the attainment of boys.

The college has established good links with parents and carers, seeking their views through questionnaires and involving them in discussions about their children's progress. The college has suitable plans to promote community cohesion based on an audit of its provision. Links are developing well with the local community and an international link has been set up with children in Gambia. Links with the various religious and ethnic groups represented in the wider United Kingdom are less developed.

Procedures for safeguarding students are satisfactory. Staff receive appropriate training in child protection and there are thorough recruitment procedures to check the suitability of staff to work with children. The governing body is supportive of the college and has recently been reorganised to sharpen its ability to challenge the college's performance. It is developing its role well and has benefited from training and advice from the local authority.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A slightly higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires during the inspection. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the way in which their children are kept safe and how the college keeps them informed about their children’s progress. They also feel that the college is well led and managed and several recognise that the strength of leadership has produced the recent improvements in the college’s performance. A few parents and carers expressed concern about how well the college dealt with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the college had good arrangements for managing behaviour and judged students’ behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Cullompton Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 123 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 605 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	32	68	55	15	12	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	27	87	71	4	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	40	72	59	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	32	69	56	12	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	27	22	86	70	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	17	82	67	13	11	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	19	84	68	11	9	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	25	20	73	59	9	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	20	86	70	8	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	20	65	53	16	13	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	13	78	63	11	9	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	19	87	71	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	31	77	63	5	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

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.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Cullompton Community College, Cullompton EX15 1DX

As you know your college was inspected recently and I am writing to let you know what the inspection team thought about the quality of education you receive. A fuller inspection report is available from the college or on the Ofsted website and I encourage you and your parents or carers to read a copy. Thanks to those of you who took time to talk to inspectors about your work and life at the college.

Here are the main points.

- Your college provides a satisfactory education and due to the strong leadership and hard work of staff it is continuing to improve.
- The college's examination results had slipped recently; however, these are getting better due to the good quality of teaching. As a result, you now make satisfactory progress with your learning.
- You enjoy coming to the college because of the interesting lessons, clubs and other activities on offer.
- The college helps you to participate in school life and the local community. It also helps you to develop a good understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle.
- You work well together and your behaviour is good in lessons and around the college.
- The college provides a high standard of care and it ensures those of you who need extra support get it.
- The college has established a good relationship with your parents and carers who are very pleased with how the college helps you to learn.

I have asked the college to do a few things to help it to improve.

- Review health and safety procedures to ensure these are as robust as possible.
- Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that teachers use assessment information and marking consistently in all subjects, and that they give you more opportunities to explain your ideas to the whole class.
- Ensure that the range of options you can follow in Years 10 and 11 meet your needs and that they are closely linked to the courses you study in Years 7 to 9.

- Complete quickly its plans to make sure the college operates within its budget.

You can help by always trying your hardest and by discussing your ideas about optional courses with your tutors.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector

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