

# Ifield Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	126071
<b>Local authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	381183
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Long HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1083
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	William Lind
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14–15 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Crawley Avenue Ifield Crawley RH11 0DB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01293 420500
<b>Fax number</b>	01293 420501
<b>Email address</b>	office@ifieldcc.co.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	25–26 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	381183



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Long

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lesley Farmer

Additional inspector

Gordon Jackson

Additional inspector

Cyndi Millband

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 34 lessons taught by 33 teachers. Five of these observations were conducted jointly with school leaders. The lessons were selected to enable a cross-section of staff to be seen teaching, to cover the full age range and include lessons where students were taught in attainment-based groups. Short visits were made to additional support sessions for students needing help to catch up in areas such as reading. Meetings were held with groups of students, staff in leadership roles, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also analysed 119 responses to the parent/carer questionnaire completed during the inspection and examined student' and staff's responses in their questionnaires. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at development plans, school self-evaluations, students' progress records and samples of their work, together with policies, including for safeguarding students' welfare.

## Information about the school

The school is of average size. A much higher proportion of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities than in most similar schools. Of these, the majority have emotional, social and behavioural needs. The numbers of students of minority ethnic heritages, and of students who speak English as an additional language, have risen slightly in recent years and are just above national averages. The majority of these students are of Indian, Pakistani or African descent. The school meets the current floor standard.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of students</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of students</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Ifield Community College is a good school and is rated highly by students and their parents and carers. Students’ achievement has improved strongly in recent years as teaching has gained strength. From below average overall starting points, students make good progress, catching up with their peers nationally so their attainment is in line with national averages by the end of Year 11. The sixth form is satisfactory. Students achieve well on vocational courses but their progress is satisfactory on AS- and A-level programmes.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Lessons are usually engaging and well planned. Teachers are knowledgeable, enthusiastic and keen to explore innovative approaches to teaching. Provision is good for students needing extra help with learning, including via additional sessions and in mainstream classes. In most lessons, activities are tailored well to meet students’ differing needs; teachers’ skilled questioning ensures students’ good understanding of key ideas, and useful reference to marking and feedback helps students move on. However, in a few lessons, most notably in the sixth form, these features are less evident and students’ progress is slower. Some opportunities are also missed to develop students’ numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.
- Students behave well and the school provides a safe environment for them. They are well known to and looked after well by staff, who sensitively reinforce high expectations of good behaviour. Support is effective for those students needing help to behave well. As a result, there is little disruption to learning and a positive atmosphere in lessons and around school.
- The headteacher and staff work cohesively and have secured improvement over a sustained period. Senior leaders know the school well and target development carefully, resulting, for example, in better teaching. Subject leaders make an effective contribution to improvements overall, but vary in the quality of their monitoring and improvement of teaching, including in the sixth form.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further by ensuring all lessons, especially in the sixth form:

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- involve activities which are finely adapted to meet students' varying needs
- include questioning by teachers which enables them to test and develop students' understanding so they can move their own work on
- include teachers drawing students' attention to the marking in books so they benefit from it, including by making corrections where required.
- Develop students' numeracy skills more systematically in all subjects.
- Increase the impact of subject leaders' work by ensuring all make equally good use of lesson observations and monitoring data about students' progress over time to pinpoint improvements required in subject teaching, bring about the necessary changes and check that the new approaches work.

## Main report

### Achievement of students

Students make good progress in lessons, particularly during practical tasks with opportunities to work together in pairs, or small groups, and to discuss their work. This underpins good progress in verbal communication, and in writing when making notes. Progress is especially brisk when activities capture students' attention and help them retain their learning; for example, when a Year 10 mathematics class investigated a mock crime scene, using numerical reasoning as part of their approach. In most lessons, students understand the link between their current work and their long-term targets, and know how to improve in order to reach them. They gain confidence when teachers regularly explore with them their progress towards their targets as in a Year 9 English lesson when the teacher showed students how their analysis of text had met their target. The pace is slower on the minority of occasions where these links are not secure and students know what to do, but not how to do it well so as to hit their targets.

In the main school, students make good progress over time. Examination results have improved well, including in the key areas of English and mathematics. The gain is more marked in English than mathematics because students have more systematic opportunities to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. Attainment is average by the end of Year 11, with GCSE results in line with those nationally, and results in BTEC vocational qualifications above the national average. Students make good progress in preparing for the future and aspiring to high achievement. Parents and carers are very pleased with the amount of progress their children make. Students from different ethnic groups achieve equally well and students in receipt of free school meals make as much progress as other students. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs attain less well than their peers in school and when compared with similar groups nationally, but the gap is closing because of the school's good support. In the sixth form, students' overall attainment on entry is below the national average, but rising as attainment in the main school goes up. Sixth form students make good progress on vocational courses, responding well to the structured learning programmes so that their attainment is above the national average. Students make satisfactory progress on AS- and A-levels and a higher than

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average proportion finishes courses. Their attainment on completion is rising but remains below national averages. Relatively few gain high grades because they do not always develop a deep enough understanding of the subject, or become independent enough in their learning. This varies between subjects due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers have high expectations of students' achievement. Parents, carers and students are very positive about the quality of teaching. Teachers manage behaviour and resources skilfully so lessons are calm but productive. They play a good role in students' social and moral development, expecting good behaviour and encouraging teamwork and harmonious relationships between different groups of students.

Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan challenging work. They are not afraid to try new approaches, such as using ideas from research on neuroscience to plan activities. Lessons are well sequenced and sustain students' attention. Tasks are often adjusted well for different groups of students, based on their differing attainment. On a few occasions, this is not the case and the work is too hard or too easy for some students. Discussions are a regular and useful feature of lessons. Teachers use them well overall to develop students' ideas and to check their progress. Occasionally this aspect is outstanding; for example, in a BTEC music lesson, the teacher expertly questioned students' about their understanding of a piece of music and re-focused the lesson based on his analysis of their understanding. Crucially, this discussion also enabled the students to see how to move their own leaning forward in relation to their targets. In the few lessons or parts of lessons where questioning or reference to students' targets lacks this depth, progress is reduced and students do not build independent learning skills. The impact is greatest on AS- and A-level courses where students experience a significant rise in the complexity of work. Marking is good overall and some is outstanding. Teachers often use it well to help students improve. Its impact is occasionally lessened when students are not required to respond to it.

Students' progress is tracked carefully over time. Where progress is slow, or students are identified as having special educational needs, intervention is good. In providing support, staff strike a good balance between offering extra sessions, including one-to-one work, and additional in-class support from teachers or other adults.

Good support for students' literacy across the curriculum is becoming embedded and bearing fruit in rising attainment in English. Numeracy is further behind and, while the school knows where different subjects might contribute, this is as yet unsystematic and attainment in mathematics is rising more slowly.

There are a wide range of popular clubs and after-school activities, including some leading to awards in sports and mathematics in collaboration with local primary schools.

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## **Behaviour and safety of students**

Students get on well together and are typically considerate of each other and of staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and contribute positively to its good atmosphere. Relationships are harmonious between younger and older students and between those of different ethnic groups. Sixth form students set a good example to others with their maturity and the way they take on roles, such as organising events involving younger students.

The school's expectations for good behaviour are consistent and are applied evenly by staff. The very great majority of students respond well, are punctual to lessons and engage readily in learning so that most lessons are uninterrupted. When disruptions do occur, they are usually managed well by staff. Students who have difficulty in behaving properly receive a good range of support. The school is successful in enabling most students to stay in school and to learn. The good focus on identifying 'at-risk' students ensures intervention. Good links are maintained with external agencies, such as social services, to support families when required. The school provides high quality care for students, who are confident they can turn to staff over any concern. Effective steps are taken to tackle prejudice and bullying of all kinds. Through curriculum programmes such as for personal, social and health education, together with citizenship, students develop a good awareness of how to behave toward each other and of right and wrong. Students say there is some low-level bullying but that it is almost always cleared up quickly if reported to staff.

Attendance has been below average but, through determined work by the school with students overall, and with those where there are concerns, attendance is now in line with the national average, and rising. This reflects the school's good communication with families, a feature evident in the questionnaire responses.

## **Leadership and management**

The headteacher provides clear direction. He is well supported by a capable senior leadership team. Good monitoring of teaching and of students' progress enables them to identify accurately what the school does well and what could be better. This is used well to define priorities in strategic planning, including for staff development, and to refine the curriculum. Teaching has improved securely, with commensurate impact on achievement, and provides strong testimony of the school's good capacity to gain further ground.

The curriculum is developed well to meet the needs of different groups of students and makes a good impact on their achievement. There is a good range of vocational and academic provision in the main school and students welcome the opportunities on offer. Good account is taken of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in taught programmes and in behaviour management so as to build a positive ethos. Students enjoy a wide range of subjects, valuing the academic alongside sport and the arts. Students are proud of the high quality art work on

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display and of the performing arts events. The school takes good steps to enrich students' experiences, such as trips to the First World War battlefields at Ypres. The sixth form curriculum is being sensibly adapted in response to need. There is a growing range of vocational courses to complement the academic routes which are not suitable for all students. Guidance for students concerning course options has sharpened this year and is now effective in ensuring they select appropriate courses. The sixth form offers valuable opportunities for the reducing numbers of students who do not gain good qualifications up to Year 11, to try again in crucial GCSE courses such as mathematics and English.

All leaders are held tightly accountable for students' achievement. Ensuring equality of opportunity for all students is a high priority and school leaders do not tolerate discrimination. The governing body monitors the school's progress assiduously, providing a good balance of support and challenge. Sixth form leadership is satisfactory and improving, with a close watch being kept on students' option choices and progress this academic year. Subject leaders make a good overall contribution to monitoring and improving teaching in their areas. Nevertheless, there are some inconsistencies in how well they use lesson observations, and the monitoring of students' progress over time, to pinpoint how teaching could be improved and to bring this about. This is particularly evident in the sixth form, resulting in weaker teaching in some courses and in general at this stage, compared with the rest of the school.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and the school sets high standards in this regard. The recording of checks carried out on staff, risk assessments of premises and equipment and the monitoring of attendance are efficient.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



27 January 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Ifield Community College, Crawley RH11 0DB**

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited you. We really enjoyed speaking with you. This letter is a summary of the full report, which I would urge you to read. We judge your school to be providing you with a good education.

- You make good progress in the main school and reach the expected levels when you leave. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding. The best lessons involve you thoroughly in learning, with good discussion. Work is provided which matches your ability and challenges you to do your best. A few lessons, particularly in the sixth form, are not so effective in helping you move on. You usually, but not always, respond to teachers' marking. The school is working to develop your basic literacy and numeracy skills through learning in all subjects. It is doing well in literacy, but you do not have enough opportunities to practise skills in numeracy.
- You told us you were proud of your school, pleased with the progress you make and feel well looked after. We saw for ourselves that the very great majority of you behave well and work hard, and we judged there to be a good atmosphere for learning. Your attendance has improved; please keep this up.
- The headteacher and the staff work hard together to improve the school. They concentrate well on the most important areas, such as teaching and behaviour. However, there are some inconsistencies in how each department makes improvements in the quality of its teaching, especially in the sixth form.

I have asked the headteacher to include the following in his development plans:

- To ensure that all lessons provide equally well for your differing abilities, include discussions which help you understand the ideas in the lesson, and that you be asked to respond to teachers' marking.
- Develop your numeracy skills more systematically through all subjects.
- Ensure each subject area develops the quality of its teaching equally well.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Long  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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