

# Hugh Christie Technology College

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique reference number</b>	118903
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379706
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Patricia Metham HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<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>	1160
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Lesley Broom
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Barker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	White Cottage Road Tonbridge Kent TN10 4PU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01732 353444
<b>Fax number</b>	01732 376833
<b>Email address</b>	admin@hughchristie.kent.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379706



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012



## Introduction

Inspection team

Patricia Metham	Her Majesty's Inspector
James Coyle	Additional inspector
Elizabeth Duffy	Additional inspector
Carol Homer	Additional inspector
John Meinke	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 46 lessons, observed 43 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the college's work, and reviewed curriculum plans, policies, the college's self-evaluation and development plan, and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They evaluated students' attainment over three years, listened to younger students reading, and discussed examples of work with selected students. They considered 144 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers, 103 responses to the students' questionnaire and 41 responses from staff.

## Information about the school

The college is a larger than average, non-selective school in an area with grammar schools. Boys outnumber girls. It is federated with a primary school and shares sixth form provision with a neighbouring secondary school. A slightly smaller than average proportion of students is known to be eligible for free school meals. In every hundred students, fewer than seven come from a minority ethnic group and only three speak English as an additional language. The proportions of students on the school action and school action plus programmes or with a statement of special educational needs are in line with national averages. Predominantly, these students have behavioural, emotional and social issues. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

The college is organised into four academies: one provides an integrated curriculum for Year 7; one focuses on core and English Baccalaureate subjects; another focuses on physical education (PE), design and technology, applied learning and the arts; the fourth is the sixth form base. While students have academy-based tutor groups, their programmes of study are supported across the college. The college has specialist technology status and holds the BECTA Information and Communication Technology Mark. It participates in the Kent and Medway school-centred initial teacher training programme (SCITT) and belongs to a partnership of teaching schools.

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- The college provides a satisfactory quality of education overall. It has particular strengths in its provision for Year 7 students and in subjects linked to its specialism. The sixth form is good. More students are staying on into Years 12 and 13 and A level results are improving. Last year's leavers all progressed to further education, training or employment.
- The governing body and college leaders have an ambitious vision for the college as 'first choice' for all abilities and interests. Comprehensive support for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the college ethos, teaching and curriculum. Action plans are realistic and decisive steps are taken to tackle weaknesses. Systematic monitoring and professional development are increasing the proportion of good or better teaching, with teachers' performance management determined by students' achievement. The impact is evident in students' increasingly positive attitudes to learning and in rising attainment.
- Attainment and progress, particularly by the middle ability band, are strengthening. In response to low achievement in English, literacy development and assessment are now built into all lessons and are having a positive impact. Most sixth formers make at least the progress expected, from a low base.
- While teaching overall is satisfactory, teachers' skills and confidence are steadily increasing. Expectations in lessons are not always high enough to challenge the more able, although examples of good practice were observed when students tackled complicated topics. Guidance given to students when work is marked is not always sufficiently precise, and its impact is lessened when students are not given time to reflect and respond.
- Overall, behaviour is satisfactory and attendance improving. Students follow advice about keeping safe. A few, often those with special educational needs, can become distracting in lessons but most work well together and are confident that teachers 'always want the best for you'.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**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

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

- Build on recent improvements in attainment and progress, especially in English, by ensuring that:
  - students' progress in all aspects of English, including extended writing, is accelerated and their literacy skills developed across all subjects
  - in all lessons, expectations are high and tasks well matched to students' abilities and interests.
- Strengthen the impact of assessment to enhance learning by:
  - ensuring that all marking gives precise and accurate guidance on how to improve and that students are given time to respond to it
  - using varied strategies to help students of all abilities identify weaknesses and develop skills they can apply confidently in different contexts.
- Eliminate the occasional low-level disruption created by a small number of students, by ensuring that:
  - effective use is made of information about students' behaviour, to identify trends and pre-empt problems
  - staff responses to distracting behaviour by a few students are consistent and are effective in maintaining the momentum of others' learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of students

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Students' attainment on entry is below average, especially in reading. Transition into Key Stage 3 is successfully supported by an approach that focuses on basic skills and combines team-teaching of large groups with well-targeted support for those with special educational needs. The firm foundation developed in Years 7 for those with special educational needs is strengthening their achievement further up the college; for example, in Year 10, three out of every four students on the school action and school action plus programmes are on track to achieve challenging targets. Good progress enjoyed by a Year 7 class of middle and lower ability students was evident in a session based on *Billy the Kid*. All could explain what they had learnt: new vocabulary, what to look for when analysing a character, and how to support interpretations through relevant quotations. They 'bubbled' with a justifiable sense of achievement. A class of more able Year 7 students following an accelerated and more academic programme showed enterprise and commonsense in their response to the challenge: 'Could I save a rain forest?'

In the three-year Key Stage 4, more able students are encouraged to take options required for the English Baccalaureate, including a foreign language and a humanities subject. While early GCSE entry has enabled some to move on to AS courses in Year 11, early entry for English is being discontinued. A high proportion of C grades, and a correspondingly smaller proportion of A\* to B grades, gained in Year 10 would make it more difficult for the college to meet new government floor

**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

targets. Ensuring that all students gain at least five A\* to C grades or equivalent is a college priority. Those at risk of leaving with fewer than five are encouraged to complete an additional one-year vocational qualification in Year 11. There has been a steady increase in the proportion meeting this college target; it is now above average. Those in the middle ability band make significantly better progress than expected. Students respond well to controlled assessments and coursework. Boys in particular respond well when activities have a competitive element and topics capture their interest. Year 11 students, for example, showed skills and commitment during a basketball assessment as part of their sports studies accreditation. In a Year 10 class, there was lively and thoughtful debate about events leading up to 'The Night of the Long Knives' in Hitler's Germany. In this, as in most lessons, opportunities to promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development were well exploited. Gaps between different college groups are closing: students known to be eligible for free school meals are exceeding their targets and girls are progressing well in mathematics.

Students enter Year 12 with low prior attainment. They make best progress in applied and vocational subjects, using technology confidently to support individual projects as well as developing ideas through discussion and shared problem solving. Year 12 boys spoke enthusiastically about the skills and knowledge acquired in a computer networking course, for example: 'I've learnt how to create networks, and about software. I've gained knowledge and learnt how to apply skills.' Good progress was seen in a Year 13 biology lesson, with students working towards a presentation on hormones and fertility in humans. The proportion gaining two or more A levels or equivalent has increased and the proportion going to university has risen from a sixth to nearly a half.

Almost all the parents and carers responding to the questionnaire are confident that their children are making good progress and developing effective communication and numeracy skills. These responses reflect students' positive attitudes to learning; however, progress, while improving, is still satisfactory overall.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching is improving. Strengths include: sound subject knowledge; a productive rapport with students; lesson planning that establishes what is to be learnt and sets out strategies to support differing needs and learning styles; well-managed pair and group work; and confident use of resources. A Year 9 geography lesson, for example, began with an open-ended challenge that captured students' interest, tested their knowledge and sparked lively debate as they considered possible groupings for about thirty items associated with rain forests. In less effective lessons, lack of challenge limits progress, especially by the more able. Opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage independent thinking and creativity. Much marking is thorough and constructive but not all combines praise with precise guidance on how students can do better. Its impact is diminished when students are not given time to try out the improvements suggested and to correct mistakes.

**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

Teaching and the curriculum promote students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, both in and out of the classroom, for example through the study of world literature and through community projects with the very young and the elderly, and through positive examples set by teachers and support staff.

Parents and carers responding to the questionnaire consider their children to be well taught and feel they are helped to support their children's learning. These comments are typical: 'My child is very happy at school and, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the staff, she is progressing well' and 'The teachers recognise my child's strengths and push and encourage her to excel.' Their view that teaching has strengths is supported by inspection evidence.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Most students treat adults and each other with cheerful friendliness and the college has a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. The behaviour of a small number of challenging students is occasionally disruptive when teaching fails to channel their energies constructively. Students are aware of different forms of bullying, feel that this is not a major issue and are confident that problems will be dealt with effectively. Attendance is improving, partly in response to students' increasing appreciation of what the college offers and partly in response to the brisk action taken in dealing with unauthorised absence.

Almost all those responding to the questionnaire, including students and staff, are rightly confident that the college keeps children safe. Safeguarding and risk-assessment procedures are thorough and staff are well trained. However, the disruptive behaviour of a minority causes parents and carers understandable concern when it interferes with teaching and learning.

**Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. Federation with a primary school has led to changes in the governing body and college leadership. Governors hold the college to account rigorously and ensure that statutory responsibilities are met. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough and regularly reviewed. The governing body's support for priorities identified by college leaders – the appointment of a literacy leader, for example – underpins improvement. Planning by leaders and managers is based on thorough and accurate evaluation of current provision and students' patterns of achievement. Teachers and support staff undertake an extensive programme of training each year, with sufficient flexibility to meet personal development needs. Monitoring by senior leaders ensures that training is appropriate and its impact evaluated. A teacher commented: 'There are always challenges to rise to.'

As the executive headteacher stresses, federation provides opportunities to break a cycle of low aspiration and poor achievement, ensuring pupils arrive at the college with positive attitudes to learning and sound functional skills. The impact is already perceptible, and is being successfully extended through the Year 7 REAL programme.

**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

This reinforces and develops students' literacy and numeracy, encourages the application of skills and knowledge developed in one area to questions raised in another, and deploys adults efficiently through team teaching of large groups and individual support for students with identified needs. It is tailored to meet all needs; the more able, for example, embark upon a pathway leading to the English Baccalaureate. Staff and students are highly committed, behaviour is good, and progress by students of all abilities is strengthening perceptibly. Students whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, for example those on the school action plus programme, are responding to well-managed interventions, such as one-to-one support and booster sessions. In other years, positive attitudes to learning are improving progress by previously underachieving groups, such as girls and those known to be eligible for free school meals. Sixth form partnership with a high-achieving school has broadened students' options and increased numbers in Year 12 and Year 13.

Effective promotion of equality and tackling of discrimination are seen in the equality of respect and support given to vocational and academic courses, in closing achievement gaps, and in the matter-of-fact way students respond to individual differences. Through its extra-curricular programme and links with community groups, the college ensures that family circumstances rarely limit students' opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It supports weekend and holiday activities and residential experiences such as trips to the Welsh mountains. Staff, students and parents remark upon the college's sense of community. The increasing proportion of good or better teaching, students' strengthening motivation and rising attainment, and the success with which the curriculum meets diverse needs indicate that capacity for further improvement is strong.



## 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.**



4 March 2012

Dear Students

### **Inspection of Hugh Christie Technology College, Tonbridge TN10 4PU**

My colleagues and I greatly appreciated the cheerful and open way you answered our questions and showed us your work during our inspection. Yours is a satisfactory and improving college. We agree with the parent who told us that Hugh Christie 'treats children with respect and gives them space to be themselves'.

Amongst the college's greatest strengths are the REAL programme for Year 7, the ways in which the curriculum meets your individual needs and interests, and the very positive working relationship most of you have with your teachers. As some of you said to us: 'They always want the best for you. You get more chances.' You benefit from the college's links with other schools and with local groups that run weekend and holiday activities for you. The progress of many of you, which is currently satisfactory, will be even better if you can improve your reading and literacy levels. It is good to know that increasing numbers of you are staying into the sixth form and gaining qualifications that enable you to go on to higher education, training or employment.

We have asked your headteacher to ensure that:

- teachers always have high expectations of what you can achieve and give each of you work that is both challenging and manageable
- you do much better in English and practise your literacy skills in all subjects
- teachers use varied approaches in lessons to help you assess your progress
- the marking of your work always includes guidance on how to improve and you are given time to think about and respond to that advice
- occasional disruptive behaviour by a few of you in lessons is not allowed to make it hard for the rest of you to get on with your learning.

All of you can help by aiming high and working hard to make good progress.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham  
Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**