

Colne Community School and College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115376
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357744
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	David Anstead HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1440
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Hindley
Principal	Nardeep Sharma
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. The inspection team saw 55 lessons taught by 54 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, the school council, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at students' books, analysed assessment data, checked policies and read reports about the school from the local authority. The views of 192 parents and carers, 200 students and 64 members of staff, expressed in questionnaires, were taken into account.

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

- How good is the achievement of all students and, especially, of lower-attaining students and of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- Has the sixth form improved since the last inspection?
- How well has new leadership taken the school forward over the last three years?

Information about the school

The school is well above average in size. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 5% of students are from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about average. The school has held specialist status in sports for ten years and recently achieved the International School Award.

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****2**

Main findings

The headteacher had only been in post for two weeks at the time of the last inspection. Over the succeeding three years he has brought considerable vigour to the work of the school and, together with his reformed senior and middle leadership teams, has driven forward improvements in a range of areas. The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory and it is well placed to improve further.

The care, guidance and support provided to students are good and promote good outcomes in students' personal development and well-being. Attendance has improved markedly and is above average with the proportion of students who are persistently absent being sharply reduced. The extent to which students feel safe at the school is outstanding. Students say there is no oppressive or intimidatory behaviour and if there was, they are confident the school would deal with it well. Parents and carers concur with 98% of those responding to a questionnaire agreeing that they feel their child is safe at the school. Safeguarding procedures are excellent as is the promotion of a cohesive and harmonious community. Behaviour and attitudes to learning were good and often outstanding in most lessons visited. Its culture and ethos make the school a good place in which to learn.

Good leadership and management of teaching and learning have provided high- quality training about what is expected. Where teachers have followed the guidance and successfully been able to meet the school's high expectations, teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. However, not all teachers have mastered what is expected and practice is variable. Although teaching is clearly improving, overall it is satisfactory. This is because a minority of teaching is overly teacher directed, restricting the opportunities for students to work independently or in small groups on different tasks matched to their needs. Some activities lack sparkle and challenge and fail to engage and enthuse students.

In 2010, the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE went up noticeably and the proportion attaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics also increased but not significantly so. Although students were awarded a greater number of GCSE grades in 2010, the standards they reached in them remained in line with those of previous years and, therefore, attainment remained average overall. This does show however that improving teaching is beginning to raise attainment.

School development planning is very good and based upon robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and together with his senior leaders injects tremendous drive and ambition into improving the school but this has yet to impact fully on the quality of teaching and on achievement. All outcomes apart from achievement are now good and have improved rapidly. Most aspects of the school's work, including the overall effectiveness of the sixth form are judged to be

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grade higher than at the last inspection. It is clear that from the school's strong track record over the last three years that it has a good capacity to sustain its improvement.

Up to 40% of the 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?

■ Raise achievement by:

- spreading the best practices in teaching to ensure that teaching and learning are of a consistently good quality
- ensuring learning activities consistently engage and interest students and are of appropriate challenge
- making sure all teachers provide opportunities in lessons for students to work independently and in small groups.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry is average. The pattern of attainment in GCSE examinations for the last three years is broadly average which represents satisfactory achievement. There are minimal differences in the achievement of students when considered by gender and ethnicity. However, in 2010 lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities made inadequate progress and left school with a limited number of qualifications. Analysis of the school's tracking data and observations of the progress currently being made by this group of students in lessons show that their progress is now satisfactory. The progress being made by lower-attaining students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved most in English, but remains lower in mathematics.

The quality of learning is satisfactory. Where it was best, clear expectations are established and maintained which reinforce good behaviour and learning proceeds at a good pace. Where learning is satisfactory, teachers tend to talk to the class for lengthy spells and students are set the same work to do, which is too easy for some and too difficult for others. In a handful of such lessons, and mostly those of lower-attaining students, off-task behaviour disrupted the learning of others. Of a sample of students responding to a questionnaire, 35% disagreed that behaviour at the school is good. Despite this perception, good behaviour makes a strong contribution to learning in most lessons, apart from the odd isolated example where it is less than good.

Spiritual, moral and social development is good and reflects the good behaviour and relationships that exist. Good spiritual development was seen in a Year 11 drama lesson where students acted out roles of people with different belief systems. In a sixth form photography lesson, students reflected on the effect of imagery on beliefs, stereotypes and prejudice. Students' cultural development is outstanding as an outcome of the school's well-established international links with other schools and especially the partnership with a school in Thailand.

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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	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Students behave extremely well in lessons where tasks interest them and where the tendency of a few older students to stray off task is well managed by their teachers. Almost all students are aware of their target grades, their current levels of attainment in each subject and can explain what they need to do to improve their work. In some lessons though, the use of questioning by teachers is superficial and they fail to check at regular intervals how well students understand new concepts. Good assessment information is available to teachers about the prior attainment of their students but this is not used by some teachers to plan work of an appropriate challenge to the range of needs in a class.

The most striking feature of this school's broad and balanced curriculum is the way in which it has been developed through the impact of its sports college status. Extensive student leadership programmes prompt self worth. Subject links between sport and other curriculum areas such as design and technology have honed students' problem-solving skills. Links with other institutions are outstanding. They involve working with students and their teachers from over 55 partner schools. In turn this strengthens transition from the primary to the secondary curriculum. Good application of literacy and numeracy across subjects has a good impact on consolidating students' learning; however, opportunities to enrich the curriculum through the use of information and communication technology are sometimes missed. Visits at both local and international level have a positive impact on

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students' understanding of the wider world. There are a good range of well-attended optional clubs and activities.

Arrangements for ensuring Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are well integrated when they join the school in Year 7 are good. The quality of support for vulnerable students and, especially, looked after children is good and, consequently, the attendance of these students this term has been 100%. However, support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less effective because tracking of their progress and development is less rigorous. Support for students with behavioural problems, such as the use of the isolation room and internal exclusion, has reduced fixed and permanent exclusion rates dramatically in the last three years. Behaviour is better at Key Stage 3 where these new strategies for managing behaviour have been in place from when these students joined the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers at all levels are focussed on improving standards and meeting challenging targets, giving the school good ambition and drive. The good leadership and management structure enables leaders to monitor performance and agree targets with individual teachers that support the aims of the school development plan. Provision for training staff and supporting teachers in striving for excellence in their professional skills is good and has high levels of take-up by staff. Although the quality of teaching is improving, it has not yet reached the target the school has set for itself, which is for all lessons to be good or better.

The effectiveness with which community cohesion is promoted is outstanding because the school has a clear understanding of its context from a detailed and informative analysis. Students have exceptional involvement with others at local, regional, national and international levels and particularly through specialist sports college activities, including participation in world championship sailing events. Action to tackle discrimination is good, and gaps in the performance of different student groups are closing. The past underachievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been rectified although the school recognises that achievement in mathematics remains lower. Safeguarding students is taken extremely seriously by all staff and the governing body, resulting in exemplary systems and procedures. The governing body is passionately committed to helping the school improve and to sustaining strong links between it and the community. They have had an excellent impact on the school's effective and efficient use

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of resources but have not evaluated the examination data sufficiently well to be able to challenge the school's performance, which is still satisfactory.

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	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Outcomes have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The progress made by sixth formers on AS- and A-level courses is good overall, and outstanding in photography and art. It is satisfactory in mathematics and science. The sixth form includes a sports academy provided through the school's specialist status offering vocational qualifications. This is enormously popular with students from other schools and the progress these students make is outstanding. Retention rates are now broadly average, attendance is above average and behaviour is good and supports learning well. Students make a very positive contribution to the wider life of the school through, for example, the sports leadership programme.

Good provision is leading to the improved progress and outcomes. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers use their knowledge of students' prior achievements well to plan learning of appropriate challenge and which sustains students' interest. Aside from the sports academy, there are fewer opportunities for students to pursue vocational rather than academic qualifications. Additional enrichment activities are very good and broaden students' experiences and horizons. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There are ambitious plans derived from rigorous monitoring and analysis of performance data. Partnerships with other organisations are excellent and significantly enhance provision.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers were most positive about the extent to which the school keeps their children safe and with their overall experience of the school. This reflects the outstanding effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and the good behaviour and ethos for learning. The school is heavily oversubscribed illustrating the positive views of parents and carers about the quality of education it offers. Parents and carers were least positive about how well the school helps their children adopt healthy lifestyles with several comments attributing this to a limited choice of healthy food options towards the end of the lunch break. Inspectors judged this aspect of the school's work to be good with strengths in the amount of physical exercise students regularly undertake. Some parents and carers expressed reservations about how well the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, although in comparison to national benchmarks, parents and carers were actually more positive about the school's handling of behaviour than is generally seen in other schools. Inspectors observed a handful of lessons where behaviour was unacceptable but this was by far outweighed by the very many lessons they visited where attitudes to learning were good or outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Colne Community School and 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 192 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1440 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	56	29	121	63	11	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	50	26	138	72	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	43	22	133	69	14	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	29	120	63	11	6	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	33	17	140	73	15	8	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	18	137	71	12	6	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	18	132	69	19	10	4	2
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)	43	22	125	65	8	4	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	20	140	73	8	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	19	131	68	17	9	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	13	144	75	8	4	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	43	22	131	68	11	6	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	32	120	63	10	5	0	0

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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 Colne Community School and College, Colchester, CO7 0QL

Thank you for your friendly welcome when we inspected your school.

We found that your school is satisfactory and that it is improving rapidly. The quality of teaching you receive is satisfactory in general, although some of it is good and some outstanding. Consequently, the progress you are making is also satisfactory. Most of you behave extremely well and relationships at the school are good. The school looks after you well. You have a good range of courses to choose from at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form and you told us that you feel very safe at school. Your attendance is better than average. The headteacher and senior staff are doing a good job of making your school better.

I have asked your school to improve your academic achievement by:

- helping all teachers to be as good as the best teachers
- ensuring the work you are given to do is interesting and not too easy or too hard for some
- making sure that your teachers give you regular opportunities in lessons to work in small groups and on your own.

You can help by always trying your best and by following the guidance your teachers give you about how to improve your work.

With best wishes for your future

David Anstead

Her Majesty's Inspector

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