

# City of Ely Community College

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110883
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	362294
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paula Heaney HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<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>	1295
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bill Harrison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Jenkinson-Dix (Principal)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Downham Road Ely, Cambridgeshire CB6 2SH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01353 667763
<b>Fax number</b>	01353 669548
<b>Email address</b>	office@elycollege.co.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	11–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	362294

---

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 1234 234, 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 documentation 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'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

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 2010

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They observed 40 part-lessons and 40 teachers. They held meetings with senior and middle managers, members of the governing body and three groups of students. They observed the college's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including 116 questionnaires from parents and carers and 144 from students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Whether students are attaining in line with expectations and making sufficient progress.
- Whether teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection.
- The effectiveness of support for students to help them reach their targets.
- Whether actions by governors, leaders and managers have had sufficient impact on raising performance.

## Information about the school

City of Ely Community College is a larger than average school. Most students are from White British backgrounds. An increasing proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly from Eastern Europe. There are also some students from Traveller backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are similar proportions of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to the average school. The college has slightly more girls than boys. The college is a specialist school in business and enterprise and holds a range of awards including Healthy Schools status, Inclusion Quality Mark, Investors in People Bronze Award and International School status. Since the last inspection the college has created a skills centre on its campus to provide vocational courses, such as hairdressing and beauty therapy, for its own students and those from other schools. The principal joined the college in April 2009.

**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

City of Ely Community College is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and has a good capacity to improve further. Leaders and managers have been very effective in securing improvements, particularly in the last year. The principal, in particular, has been relentless in her drive to ensure that detailed data are used regularly by managers to monitor the college's performance across departments and lessons. They monitor the impact of the work they do thoroughly and evaluate how well the college, the staff and the students are doing regularly and accurately. While the governing body meets its statutory requirements, governors are less effective in identifying the college's strengths and areas for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate.

Students' outcomes are satisfactory overall, and improved significantly in 2010. The proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is now at the national average. The achievement of particular groups of students, such as those from Eastern Europe, is monitored closely by the college and actions to tackle lower performance have been successful. This is as a result of the sharp focus by the principal on accelerating the rate of improvement by developing the skills of managers and teachers to deliver quality improvements across the college. Strategies have been successful across most departments. However, there remains some inconsistency among middle leaders in sustaining the pace of improvement.

The curriculum has been broadened well and includes more choice for students. For example, the wider range of vocational courses held at the college, or at partner schools and colleges, together with opportunities for students to develop their literacy and numeracy skills to help them make better progress generally. A particular strength has been the improvement in teaching and learning, which is now good. Concerted efforts to ensure lessons are planned to include a greater variety of activities, which challenge and interest students, have been largely successful. Most lessons seen by inspectors were judged to be good. In these lessons students were more active and independent in developing skills and knowledge, working effectively in groups, pairs or individually. A few lessons are less effective and in these behaviour can deteriorate occasionally as students lose interest, disrupting the learning of others. Marking is not consistently helpful to students in informing them what they need to do to improve. The college has an accurate assessment of its strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and learning and work is well underway to support all teachers to deliver high quality lessons and improve feedback to students on marked work.

Support for students is good and is targeted effectively at students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those in danger of leaving education. Students are supported well by specialists in the college's study centres and as a result exclusions have reduced. Students say they feel safe. They behave well in most lessons, and in and

**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

around the college, and treat their peers and adults with respect. They contribute well to the local community through fund raising activities, for example, and have established links overseas in order to broaden their experiences beyond the locality of the college.

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

- Improve the proportion of lessons that are good or better in the main school and in the sixth form further, and so raise achievement, by:
  - sharing good practice across the college more widely and systematically
  - increasing the range of activities that interest students and opportunities for them to learn independently
  - using student data more effectively and consistently to inform lesson planning to ensure they make the progress of which they are capable
  - ensuring consistently effective assessment of students' work so they know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve.
- Continue developing the skills of middle leaders so they can monitor students' performance and support teachers more effectively and consistently across departments.
- Ensure members of the governing body develop their monitoring skills further, and so evaluate the college's performance more effectively by:
  - increasing their knowledge of the day-to-day running of the college
  - undertaking appropriate training to increase their levels of expertise.
- About 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.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Examination results in 2010 rose sharply, particularly in English, mathematics and business studies where attainment was low in the previous year. Attainment is now broadly in line with national averages. It is high in science and information and communication technology, although for English it remains slightly below average. More students make the progress expected of them, when compared to their starting points, and college data indicate this proportion is increasing. This is as a result of increasingly effective lessons, where greater emphasis is placed on assessing what students are learning, and more effective support is available to those falling behind expectations. Progress is therefore satisfactory overall as it is too early to judge the impact of more recent improvements to teaching and learning.

Boys' performance has improved significantly as has the performance of students known to be eligible for free school meals and from Eastern Europe. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Their progress is improving due to a wider range of courses which meet their needs and interests and the specialist support they receive in the college's study centres.

These are other key features of students' outcomes.

**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

Most students enjoy college, learn a lot in lessons and say that staff in the college support them well, but a small minority do not agree that behaviour is good in all lessons.

Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons are generally good. Good behaviour deteriorates occasionally when lessons are less effective.

Students say they feel safe in and around the college.

Actions to improve attendance and persistent absence have been successful and almost all students attend punctually.

Healthy food options are limited. Students are aware of the range of extra-curricula sporting activities available. However, participation rates are not routinely monitored.

Students make a good contribution to the local and international community through activities such as fund raising, volunteering and house building projects in Zambia and India.

Business enterprise activities across the school contribute well to developing students' economic well-being, although examination results are satisfactory.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. A wider cultural awareness is promoted well across the school and students are able to reflect sensitively on a wide range of spiritual issues.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**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

## How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons seen by inspectors were good. A few were outstanding. These were characterised by effective planning, lively delivery of a range of learning activities to meet students' needs and interests, and skilful and focused questioning by teachers with expert subject knowledge. In these lessons teachers ensure that students are developing subject knowledge and skills with which to help them learn more effectively. In the less effective lessons, inspectors found a lack of challenging activities, weak use of questioning and teachers dominating the sessions, with few opportunities for students to manage their learning and make decisions around the work. Teachers use information and communication technology routinely and effectively to enhance lessons.

Staff know their students' capabilities and needs well. However, they do not use student data consistently well in determining what all the students, including those with additional learning needs, have achieved and identifying the next steps in learning. The college's marking policy is not applied consistently. Some thorough and informative examples were seen in science and in English, but marking in some other subjects is not always consistently clear in informing students of what they have achieved and what to do next to improve.

Students across the year groups are able to choose from a broad range of courses, such as courses in construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, and leisure and tourism. The range of vocational courses is increasing to meet students' interests. Effective partnership arrangements support this provision at the college, at partner colleges and at the local further education college well. Students have good opportunities to develop business enterprise skills across year group. The college has worked hard to support its students more effectively to remain in education and achieve to their potential. As a result exclusions are reducing. Specialist staff provide good quality support to specific groups and individuals to aid their progress, including developing students' literacy and numeracy skills to aid achievement.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The principal, supported ably by her leadership team, has recognised the need to accelerate improvements in performance in the college within a culture of higher expectations of both students and staff. Most middle managers have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities within the college in working with their staff to raise the quality of teaching and learning and students' achievement. This has

**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

been successful as outcomes have improved significantly and the quality of teaching and learning is now good. Lesson observations are more rigorous and accurate, informing senior leaders of good practice and key areas to develop. While improvement is rapid and continuing and good use is made of data to monitor performance and identify areas of concern, there remains some inconsistency in the pace of improvement across departments. The governing body performs its statutory duties adequately. Governors are better informed of the college's strengths and weaknesses but have less direct understanding of how it runs on a day-to-day basis.

The college is committed to equality of opportunity and monitors the performance of different groups thoroughly. College data indicate actions to improve the performance of lower and middle ability boys, those in receipt of free school meals and those from Eastern Europe are having a positive impact. The college is successful in supporting students from Traveller backgrounds to progress to the sixth form.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Effective procedures are in place to ensure students' safety and links with appropriate agencies ensure the safeguarding of more vulnerable students. The college promotes community cohesion well. It has a thorough understanding of its local context and good links with employers. For example, a meeting with parents of Eastern European students to inform them of the English education system was well received. International work, to contribute to improving the lives of others, is well established.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

Students' achievement in the sixth form is improving and is satisfactory. Although the progress they make compared with their starting points is satisfactory overall, this varies between subjects. Appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning are



**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

underway, together with closer monitoring of student attendance and those with lower entry requirements. While the range of courses on offer is satisfactory, plans are underway to broaden this further to meet students' interests and abilities. A small proportion of the sixth form follow foundation and intermediate level courses. Just over half the students completing advanced level courses progress to higher education. It is too early to measure the impact of recent changes to pastoral support, although students talk positively about the support they receive from their teachers and tutors especially if they need additional help.

Progression from Year 11 to the sixth form is increasing, with a small minority of students joining from other schools. Students value the range of extra-curricula activities on offer to them, including opportunities to volunteer and to mentor younger students. The sixth form is led satisfactorily and is integrated into whole college planning and assessment more effectively. The head of sixth form has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement and work is already underway to improve performance further.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers returned the questionnaire to inspectors. Most of the responses received were positive about the college. However, a few were concerned about differences in the quality of teaching between lessons, how the college helps them to support their children's learning and how effectively the college deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found this to be substantiated in a very small minority of lessons and noted the range of strategies in place and actions underway to tackle remaining weaknesses. Around one in five respondents left the questions relating to the college taking account of suggestions and concerns and preparing their children for the future blank as they felt it was too early to comment.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at City of Ely 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1295 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	24	75	65	12	10	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	16	94	81	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	22	70	60	17	15	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	17	78	67	12	10	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	9	8	82	71	16	14	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	12	77	66	20	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	13	72	62	20	17	2	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)	24	21	69	59	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	17	77	66	12	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	17	60	52	26	22	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	12	65	56	14	12	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	23	20	74	64	10	9	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	19	84	72	8	7	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



5 November 2010

Dear Students

**Inspection of City of Ely Community College, Ely, CB6 2SH**

I would like to thank you for your openness and friendliness during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your comments and opinions. We found your behaviour is good in most lessons and around the college, your punctuality in attending lessons is good and your attendance is improving.

The inspection found that yours is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Results in examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2010 improved significantly to the national average, although results in English were slightly lower. Teaching and learning are good in most lessons. A small minority of lessons do not meet your needs and interests fully, or challenge you sufficiently well. Most of you enjoy college, but a few of you are concerned about how poor behaviour disrupts lessons and the availability of healthy food options. Leadership and management are good. The principal, managers and staff are all working hard to ensure the college continues to improve further.

We have asked the college to do the following things.

Increase the proportion of good and better lessons across the college by ensuring your lessons are carefully planned to meet your needs and interests and provide comments on your marked work to help you improve.

Continue the work it is already doing with managers and staff in terms of their training and development so they can help you achieve your potential.

Involve the governors more with the day-to-day running of the college so they can monitor its performance more effectively.

You all can help by behaving well at all times, continuing to attend regularly and punctually and by letting your teachers know how you learn best.

We wish you well with your future studies.

Yours sincerely

Paula Heaney

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 1234 234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**