

Rawlins Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 120301

Local Authority Leicestershire

Inspection number 358736

Inspection dates 14–15 February 2011

Reporting inspector Deborah James

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school Secondary

School category Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils14–18Gender of pupilsMixedGender of pupils in the sixth formMixedNu mber of pupils on the school roll1415Of which, number on roll in the sixth form516

Appropriate authorityThe governing bodyChairDavid Lathbury

HeadteacherCallum Orr (Principal)Date of previous school inspection19 September 2007School addressLoughborough Road

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Age group 14–18

Inspection dates 14–15 February 2011

Inspection number 358736

Registered Childcare provision

Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision

Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision

Not previously inspected

Age group	14–18 14–15 February 2011			
Inspection dates				
Inspection number	358736			

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 59 lessons, observed 59 teachers and held meetings with staff, groups of students and a small group of governors. They observed the college's work and studied a range of documentation, including the college's improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, department monitoring evidence and records of students' progress. Inspectors also reviewed responses to questionnaires returned from students, staff and 281 parents and carers.

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

- How well are current students, particularly girls and those known to be eligible for free school meals, progressing at Key Stage 4?
- What is the current level of attainment and progress in English at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5?
- How effective have the college's actions been in improving the quality of teaching and learning?

Information about the school

This is an above average-sized college where the large majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average but the proportion of students with statements is well above average. Eight per cent of students are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The college has specialist status in media arts, provides education for a number of post-16 students with moderate learning difficulties and provides childcare facilities. The college has gained the Artsmark Award, the

International Colleges Award, the ICT mark, the Eco Colleges award and the Healthy Colleges Standard. It also holds an award for Investors in People, renewed in 2010.

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

Rawlins Community College is an inclusive community where individual students are valued and well cared for. They are supported well in developing strong moral values, self-confidence and consideration for others. As a result, students are able to make a good contribution to the college and wider community. Students participate enthusiastically in the life of the college through the college council, as elected house or sports captains and through a developing student voice programme.

In 2010, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C was high and students made progress in line with national expectations. However, attainment and progress in English were significantly below average. This impacted on the proportion of students gaining five good GCSEs including English and mathematics and this measure was below national standards. In addition, a small group of girls and students known to be eligible for free school meals made less progress than other students. Senior leaders are acutely aware of these issues and have put in place a range of interventions to improve attainment and progress. The rigorous monitoring of the academic performance of students in Year 11, together with the support for them if they fall behind, have been major factors in improving academic standards this year. These improvements have been particularly evident in English where a recently appointed subject leader has adapted the curriculum and put in place a thorough intervention programme to support students at risk of underachievement. As a result, current Year 10 and 11 students are now making the expected progress in English. College data for 2011 indicates that there is no discernable difference in the overall attainment of boys and girls and that the gap between students known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups in Year 11 has begun to close.

The college has put into place a number of strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning and the positive impact of these was seen during the inspection. The proportion of teaching that is good has increased but too much remains satisfactory and students are not consistently supported to make good, rather than satisfactory, progress. Many lessons are not planned thoroughly enough to meet the needs of all students and the pace of learning is too slow. Teachers direct questions so that only a few students are required to respond and teachers do not make best use of questioning opportunities to extend students' understanding. The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent, with a significant amount of marking that is brief and infrequent. The most effective marking gives students clear written information about what they have achieved and how they can improve.

Since the last inspection, the college has also made tangible progress in a number of other key areas. Changes to the curriculum have made a significant contribution to providing appropriate personalised courses for students leading to increased motivation, enabling students to have greater success and find relevance in their learning. Students now have

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

good attendance. The capacity of the college's leadership team has been considerably strengthened by the extensive restructuring of leadership roles and responsibilities throughout the college. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the college's current strengths and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. The college improvement plan sets realistic and challenging targets for improvement. Governors have close links to faculties and systems to take account of the views of students. As a result of these features, the college has good capacity for further 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?

- Accelerate the rate of student progress by ensuring that at least 70% of teaching is good or better by December 2011 through:
- increasing the pace of learning in lessons so students remain fully engaged
- ensuring that all students receive regular feedback on their work through good quality marking so that they know how well they are doing and how to improve on their current performance
- improving questioning techniques so that teachers can assess accurately students' learning and extend and challenge learners
- further developing opportunities for students to work independently
- ensuring that learning activities are matched to students' different abilities.
- Support the progress of all learners through the development of a greater understanding of the performance of specific groups of students, particularly those known to be eligible for free school meals, so that appropriate interventions are introduced to address areas of underperformance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students enjoy college; they behave well in lessons and around the buildings, respond well to requests from staff and behave considerately towards each other. Students' attainment on entry to the college is in line with national standards. In lessons they participate enthusiastically in suitably challenging activities, cooperating together in paired and group activities. Students show interest in their work and make the expected progress. However, tasks are too often set for the whole class and not matched to the needs of individual students. As a result, students are not effectively supported in making good progress. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of a well-designed curriculum together with additional support and intervention.

Students are positive, friendly and keen to talk about what they are doing. Students express confidence that the college will keep them safe and this is endorsed by parents and carers. Students are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem and that they will be listened to. They appreciate the opportunity to develop relationships with students of different year groups within their coaching groups. This recently introduced structure has replaced morning form period and gives increased

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

responsibility to older students. The college has reviewed sanctions for poor behaviour and is making increasingly effective use of a seclusion room as an alternative to exclusion. As a result, the number of students excluded over the last year has fallen significantly.

Students know how to stay healthy and are enthusiastic about the variety and quality of sporting activities they are offered. Students have been particularly successful at charitable fundraising, raising more than �6,000 for Red Nose day last year. Students' enterprise skills and awareness of the world of work are developed well through a range of enrichment enterprise activities and a period of work experience. However, other workbased skills, including basic skills in literacy and the level of punctuality, are satisfactory.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance 1	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 are known to staff as individuals and a strong pastoral structure sustains a variety of support and intervention strategies. The quality of care for students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is effective and there are many examples of the college helping students to achieve success against the odds. Working closely with a broad range of agencies, the college offers individualised programmes of support to students who are at risk of failing. Students testify to the success of these strategies. Mixed-aged coaching groups, which are highly valued by the students, successfully promote responsibility and provide peer support.

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

The curriculum has undergone recent change in order to more effectively meet the needs of all learners. At Key Stage 4, the focus has been on increasing the range of academic and vocational courses to motivate and engage all students. The curriculum has been enriched by partnership work aimed at extending vocational provision. The programme of extra-curricular, enrichment and enhancement activities is a strong feature of the curriculum, adding to students' enjoyment and contributing to other aspects of their personal development and well-being. For example, all students participate in a range of collapsed timetable 'SpArc' days that provide a good opportunity for the students to develop a wide range of cross-curricular skills.

Senior and middle leaders have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning and almost all lessons are now satisfactory or better. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and skills. In good lessons this is used effectively to provide models and examples that help to explain concepts, for instance in work on accents in English. In the most effective lessons, teachers use a sequence of activities to challenge and motivate students, checking and developing their understanding with well-targeted, probing questioning. Less successful lessons are characterised by teachers allowing students too much time to complete undemanding tasks and giving students too few opportunities to work independently or with their peers. As a result, the pace of learning slows. The college has prioritised the development of greater cross-departmental collaboration, sharing of effective teaching practice and the use of advanced skills teachers to extend the range of teaching styles and introduce a wider range of activities to engage, motivate and build the independence of learners. The college's specialist provision in media arts is a particular strength, supporting students' participation in arts-based activities with local feeder schools, the wider community and at a national level.

Students are aware of their current performance and their target grades, but these are not consistently used to ensure that students understand how they can improve their work and make further progress. Students are keen to acknowledge the extremely valuable feedback given through marking in some lessons. However, much marking is less useful, with a focus on presentation and completion rather than on prioritising the means by which learning can be improved.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The Principal and senior leaders provide the college with clear and effective strategic leadership and direction. Their vision to improve achievement for all students through improved teaching, a more appropriate curriculum and high-quality individual support and

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

intervention is shared by staff and governors. There is a recently established subject review process that involves the governing body and senior leaders in detailed analysis of departmental performance. The recent restructuring of roles and responsibilities has enabled greater support to be given to middle leaders who are now held more accountable for the progress of students within their faculties. Whole-college self-evaluation has identified appropriate areas for development and suitable plans have been put in place.

All requirements for the safeguarding of students were in place at the time of the inspection. The college has thorough systems for assessing risk and ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. Strong partnerships with a wide range of local agencies and volunteer groups are having a good impact on the care and support of students, especially those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Senior leaders ensure that parents and carers are well informed about their children's achievement and well-being through regular newsletters, remote access to the college's electronic data, regular parents' and carers' evenings and parents' and carers' forums.

Equality policies are in place and senior leaders carefully review the academic performance of different groups of students. The recent underperformance of girls appears to have been addressed effectively through improved tracking and intervention. However, actions taken to reduce the gap in attainment between students entitled to free school meals and other groups has yet to produce sustained and significant improvement. The college has a good understanding of its ethnic, religious and socio-economic context and places itself firmly at the centre of its wider community, providing facilities for pre-school children and adult learners on the college site. Students from different backgrounds get on well together.

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

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall provision is satisfactory and children from the age of six months are supported in developing a range of social, emotional and intellectual pre-school skills. Staff have a good understanding of differing teaching methods and provide a range of stimulating activities that engage the children. They work together as a team so that opportunities to note the acquisition of new skills, for example, are not missed because information is shared effectively. Links with parents and carers allow for a positive interchange of information and parents and carers are confident that their children enjoy attending nursery. All children, including those with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good opportunities to thrive in a safe environment. The quality of leadership and management of the nursery are good and this helps to create a well-motivated team with a common vision for improvement. However, outcomes and the overall quality of the provision are constrained by the physical limitations of the provision. There is currently no covered space for outdoor play while indoor facilities are focused within one single room, despite the differing needs of the children. These factors have a negative impact on overall provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Sixth form

Attainment and progress in the sixth form are satisfactory but improving. There is still some variability between subjects but this is reducing. English literature has shown improvement over the past two years while English language improved last year. College data suggests that there will be further improvement this year in both subjects. Students benefit from a range of opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to the community, including membership of college and house councils, charity fund-raising and helping younger students with reading.

All teaching observed in the sixth form was satisfactory or better and much was good. In the better lessons students were given opportunities for independent learning, which they took up readily and successfully. In the less effective lessons, students were too often passive, simply listening to the teacher or engaging in unstructured discussion. The curriculum offers a broad range of choice of courses at all levels, catering for the needs of all students and allowing a good degree of personalisation. Students speak highly of the quality of care, guidance and support. Preparation for courses is thorough, their progress is closely monitored and individual support is readily available. The Stride special needs base is a valuable inclusive provision which brings about effective learning and social integration.

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

The tracking and monitoring of student progress has become increasingly rigorous, leading to effective interventions and contributing to improving outcomes. Regular progress checks take place, and students are well aware of what they need to do to reach their targets. Precise student action plans are put in place where necessary and the college can point to instances where this has made a difference to student performance. Outcomes are satisfactory but improving and systems for securing improvement are becoming more rigorous and better-established, along with an explicit vision for post-16 provision. This provides evidence of good capacity for further improvement.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	
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	2

Views of parents and carers

Around 20% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of these parents and carers, the overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experiences in the college. They agree that their children enjoy college and feel safe. They are happy with their children's progress and believe the college keeps them well informed. A few specific concerns were raised about poor behaviour and variation in teaching quality. Inspectors found that behaviour around the college and in lessons was good but that the quality of teaching may sometimes limit students' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Rawlins 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 281 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1415 pupils registered at the school.

Statements		ngly ree	Ag	ree	Disa	gree		ngly gree
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	23	182	65	24	9	6	2
The school keeps my child safe	78	28	189	67	7	2	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	102	36	167	59	11	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	78	28	175	62	22	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	54	19	182	65	34	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	19	184	65	37	13	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	9	164	58	70	25	5	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)	51	18	189	67	23	8	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	20	189	67	24	9	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	15	172	61	33	12	9	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	12	168	60	41	15	4	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	18	183	65	28	10	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	25	179	64	22	8	1	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 schoo				
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 learni	ng,
	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: 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.

■ 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.



16 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Rawlins Community College, Loughborough, LE12 8DY

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your college recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you and were impressed with the maturity with which you answered our questions. Yours is an improving college and you are rightly proud of it.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

Rawlins Community College is a satisfactory college overall. This is because you make satisfactory progress in your lessons.

Your attendance is good and the college values you and looks after you well.

The college supports you well in developing good social and moral skills and you use these skills to make a good contribution to your college and wider community.

Much teaching is good but too many lessons lack pace and do not allow you sufficient opportunities to develop and practise new skills.

Marking does not always give you clear information on what you have achieved and how you can improve.

Senior leaders have made significant progress in improving your college since the last inspection. Achievement continues to improve, particularly in English.

We have asked the college to make the following improvements.

Improve the progress you make by making sure that more of your lessons are good or outstanding, with better marking and a faster pace.

Develop a more focused programme of interventions to support groups of students who are at risk of underachievement.

We would like you to help your college by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your college. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James

Lead inspector

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