

Patchway Community College

Hempton Lane, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4AJ

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The passion of the headteacher, supported by leaders and staff, is ensuring that there is a continuous drive for improvement. As a result teaching is improving and students now achieve well.
- School leaders and managers understand strengths and areas for improvement very well.
- Regardless of starting points, ability or special educational needs, students achieve well during their time in school.
- The inclusive nature of the school creates an atmosphere in which students behave well, feel safe and are happy to learn.
- The sixth form is effective. It has improved since the last inspection. It is an important aspect of the school's provision and is helping to raise students' aspirations further.
- The school tracks the learning of its students well. Staff use data effectively to ensure they make good progress, and to put in place effective strategies to support them when they are not.
- Teaching is good overall and has a strong emphasis on explaining how students can achieve higher grades in examinations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The good quality of teaching is not consistent enough across the school for it to be judged outstanding especially in Key Stage 3. However, strong leadership and management are securing continued improvement in this aspect.
- The way students use and apply mathematical skills in other subjects is not sufficiently planned for and as a result students lack opportunities to extend such skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons, of which eight were jointly observed with a member of the school's senior leadership team.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, a local authority adviser and school staff, including members of senior and middle leadership.
- Inspectors took account of the 18 responses to the on-line Parent View survey during the inspection and the school's own surveys of parents and carers.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own internal data on students' current progress, self-evaluation, monitoring and planning documentation, records relating to attendance and behaviour, documents relating to safeguarding, governors' records and students' work.

Inspection team

Chris King, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Marcia Headon	Additional Inspector
Martin Brown	Additional Inspector
Juliet Jaggs	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Patchway Community College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- It serves the south-west corner of South Gloucestershire which fringes the northern wards of Bristol.
- The proportion of students supported under pupil premium funding is below average.
- Sixth form provision is provided in collaboration with two other local secondary schools and a local Further Education College.
- Most students are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students supported at school action is about 17% and above average, while approximately 7% of students have school action plus a figure in line with national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 so as to increase the number of outstanding lessons by:
 - modelling the teaching strategies and practice already seen in Key Stages 4 and 5
 - making it clearer to students how to move on to the next level
 - increasing the pace, stretch and challenge of lessons to ensure that no time is wasted and students are actively engaged with their learning
 - ensuring that marking is entirely consistent and diagnostic.
- Develop numeracy across the curriculum by:
 - agreeing consistent strategies to be used within lessons by teachers
 - making clear references in schemes of work and curriculum plans in all subjects to the opportunities that exist for students to develop numeracy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students enter the school with levels of attainment which are frequently below average when compared to national benchmarks but leave with levels of attainment in line with national averages. GCSE examination results have improved steadily over the past three years.
- Regardless of their starting points, ability or special educational needs, all groups of students make better progress than their peers nationally.
- Good leadership of the tracking of students' progress in all year groups means that those not making the progress expected are provided with additional support. This ensures that students achieve well by the end of Key Stage 4.
- Although good overall, progress in mathematics is not as strong as in English because opportunities to extend numeracy skills in other subjects are missed. However, this gap is closing as a result of good subject teaching, the clear tracking of students' progress and targeted intervention by leaders.
- Literacy is well developed in the school and students benefit from a range of initiatives to ensure that they read widely. This, coupled with very effective teaching, contributes very well to students making better than expected progress in English. Senior leaders are aware that the next stage of the school's development will include the development of further strategies to embed numeracy within the curriculum. Plans are in place but not yet fully implemented.
- Parents and carers are happy with the progress made by their children and value the support given on an individual basis. Inspection evidence confirms this view.
- Creative use of the school's pupil premium funding ensures that those students that enter the school with lower than average levels of attainment are very well supported and the provision available to them is of a very high standard. They make good progress. The funding has been used to provide individual mentoring, additional revision support, and a 'prep club' for homework as well as individual support in extra-curricular activities.
- Students' attainment in the sixth form has improved strongly over the last three years. In 2012 the school had very strong results in the Level 2 BTEC courses run in Year 12 and this year achieved a high pass rate at A level. This is as a result of good teaching and the school's collaborative work with other providers.
- Retention rates in the sixth form are above national averages and students make good progress on their courses.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has improved strongly since the last inspection as a result of effective professional development and staff training. Parents, carers and students now express confidence in the quality of teaching.
- However, teaching is stronger at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. The pace of lessons in Years 7 to 9 is occasionally slower and some opportunities to challenge all students and to engage them with their learning are missed.
- Those students who are disabled or have special educational needs are supported effectively by provision that is well matched to their needs. As a result they make at least good progress.
- The best learning seen was where teachers used high-quality questioning and planned lessons that clearly enabled students to understand how they could progress, although this is not consistent across the school. Learning was particularly rapid when the lessons were tailored towards supporting students' understanding of how to move to the next level or grade. Detailed verbal and written feedback from teachers gave students, particularly in examination classes, the information they needed to meet their target grade. These lessons were engaging and students were stretched and provided with challenge. For example, a sociology lesson in the sixth form challenged students to work on a variety of high-level resources and pick out key links on the

topic of how the media portrayed stories. This was followed up by a well-structured independent task linked to examination criteria.

- Assessment data is used effectively in the school and most teachers are well aware of the needs of individual students in their classes. They check for understanding using good questioning skills and modify their lessons where it is evident there are gaps in knowledge. In those lessons that were less effective, teachers did not take the needs of individual students into account sufficiently when planning and teaching and, consequently, there was less challenge to the lesson and progress slowed.
- Students are given many opportunities to read in their lessons and the school actively promotes the benefits of reading and good communication skills and works closely with students to develop these. For example, in Year 7 the learning challenge programme, designed to improve students' personal, learning and thinking skills, develops independence and supports learning well.
- Marking is variable across the school although most teachers use a common convention of 'What Went Well' and 'Even Better If'. Where marking is truly diagnostic, students are left with a clear picture of how to improve, but this is not often enough the case. An example of good diagnostic marking was seen in design and technology where Year 11 students had very clear feedback on design work over a significant period of time. As a result, students were very clear on what they had to do to improve further and were making very good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students welcome visitors to the school and show consideration towards adults. Their relationships with each other are good. They conduct themselves well around the site and show respect for their surroundings. The sixth form students particularly appreciated being able to redecorate their area.
- Behaviour is generally good. Good relationships exist between students and staff and this means most lessons are purposeful and learning productive. The vast majority of students have a very positive attitude towards their learning and want to achieve. They value the support and help given to them by staff and, as one Year 11 student said, 'teachers will go out of their way to help you.' They are punctual to their lessons on this very long site.
- On the few occasions when lessons are interrupted by low-level disruption it is due to less engaging teaching that does not challenge students enough in their learning. This was more evident in a very small minority of lessons at Key Stage 3.
- The school has robust systems for tracking behaviour and dealing with any misbehaviour. This is understood by students, is used consistently by staff and is very effective. A well-designed reward system is in place that students value. Students use their unstructured time gainfully, appreciating the school's provision of a wide and varied range of clubs and equipment.
- The sixth form students behave maturely and are particularly effective in helping younger students during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Parents and carers believe that their children are both happy and safe at school. Students feel safe and say that if they report any concerns that they might have, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. There are relatively few instances of bullying and they are dealt with quickly and promptly by the school. Year 11 students were especially horrified by the thought of homophobic bullying and were quick to say that this did not happen in school. There is a good level of understanding of e-safety in all year groups.
- The school monitors attendance carefully and works effectively with hard-to-reach groups to ensure it does not become a barrier to achievement.
- School records show that, despite relatively large mid-year admissions of students, with very high levels of need and who frequently have been excluded from other schools, overall levels of exclusion have fallen over time. Attendance is also improving with the school's up-to-date records showing it to be in line with national expectations and improving over time.

- The school's pastoral systems are strong with many features that are well thought out and effective at promoting a happy, safe and engaging environment for students. The 'chat room' and 'early college' are just some of the many strategies used to ensure students can and do make good progress in their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides very clear and passionate leadership of the school. Over time the school has consistently improved its performance through the use of a well-targeted improvement plan and a focus on the quality of teaching.
- The school has a strong track record of improvement as a result of good leadership at all levels. Subject leaders are held to account and are clear about the school's vision and areas which need to improve still further. Effective teamwork fosters good relationships within the school and is a feature of its success: staff and governors work together to improve the school.
- The monitoring of teaching is frequent, against agreed criteria and accurate. Reviews of departments address underperformance strongly and examination results are analysed carefully. The use of performance management has been effective at improving the quality of teaching. The school's self-evaluation overall is a strength and this, coupled with the effective use of data, ensures that the school understands and is able to target its resources effectively. The increased achievement in mathematics is just one example of how the school has tackled underperformance.
- The school's curriculum is carefully thought out. At Key Stage 3, skills are developed effectively in order to address the numbers of students coming into the school with low levels of literacy and communication skills. At Key Stage 4, the school provides a full range of appropriate courses for students. In the sixth form it works effectively with a range of other providers to ensure that students can access the courses they wish to follow and which are appropriate for them. Guidance at the time of transition is very well structured and effective.
- Feedback from parents and carers is very positive with the vast majority recommending the school to others. The personalised approach from the school engages parents and carers and they feel that the school goes the extra mile to support their child. A good example of this is how the school has used the pupil premium funding creatively to ensure that students feel the benefits in terms of academic progress and overall experiences. As a result of this work the school tackles equality of opportunity effectively to ensure that no students are discriminated against.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities which allow students to extend their horizons. Assemblies focus on values and encourage students to reflect. Students show a good awareness of other cultures through lessons and visitors.
- Safeguarding is robust and effective. Staff and governors are keenly aware of the need to keep students safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors know the school well and make a good contribution to its development. Their awareness of the needs of their local community means they are well placed to support the school in its development.
 - The school's financial resources have been deployed well by governors over time. This has impacted clearly on the provision available and on the achievement of students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109296
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	401045

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
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	763
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Howell
Headteacher	Jane Millicent
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 September 2009
Telephone number	01454 862020
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