

Cullompton Community College

Exeter Road, Cullompton, EX15 1DX,

Inspection dates 22–23 January 2013

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.

- Leadership and management are good. The school is led effectively by the headteacher, who, in conjunction with other senior leaders and an extremely effective governing body, has done a great deal to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Students' achievement is good. The percentage of students achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has risen significantly over the past four years and is now above the national average.
- Staff and students treat each other with respect and behaviour across the school is good. Students feel safe and are proud of their community school. Attendance is above average.
- Teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice. In the best lessons, teachers have an accurate understanding of the ability levels of each student and set work accordingly, encouraging high levels of independence and aspiration.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is typically good, there is some less effective practice in a very small number of subject areas. Here, work is not sufficiently interesting or demanding to promote consistently good and better progress for all students.
- Although the school has started to take innovative steps to close the gaps in achievement between different groups of students, progress for a very small number, particularly those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is not yet consistently rapid across the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 25 lessons.
- Inspectors took account of 50 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires from 31 members of staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding and students' assessment information, as well as examples of students' work.
- They held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of students and the local authority School Improvement Partner.

Inspection team

Helen Matthews, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Babrul Matin	Additional Inspector
John Laver	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Cullompton Community College is a smaller than average, 11 to 16 school with approximately 524 students on roll.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as their home language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium (additional funding given to the schools by the government) is below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported by school action, at about 17%, is above the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs, at approximately 5%, is below the national average.
- A small number of Year 10 students study part time at one of the two local colleges, as part of their Key Stage 4 pathway.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets for academic performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in the small number of subjects where it is less effective by ensuring that:
 - tasks set in lessons are interesting, and better matched to students' ability
 - marking and feedback explain to students what they need to do to improve
 - students have suitable opportunities to work both independently and in groups
 - the best practice evident in some other subject areas is shared.
- Improve the achievement of those small groups of students who do less well than others, especially those eligible for the pupil premium, by:
 - providing specific early support and intervention
 - closely monitoring the impact of this support on their progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry is just below national averages. By the time students leave school, at the end of Year 11, the proportion of students achieving five or more grade A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is above the national average.
- The vast majority of students were entered early for GCSE mathematics during the winter of Year 11. This had a positive impact on both attainment in mathematics and the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.
- The proportion of students making the expected and better than the three levels of progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English has been consistently above the national average over the past few years except during 2012 where it was just below. This slight dip has been addressed robustly by the school and the current analysis of performance data and students' work all indicate that the current rate of progress is good.
- The proportion of students making three levels of progress and better between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in mathematics was just below the national average in 2011, but significantly above in 2012. Current performance data show that pupils are making good progress.
- Attainment in the majority of subjects at GCSE grades A* to C is higher than the national average. Students do particularly well in history, mathematics, English literature and religious education.
- The progress of disabled students and those with special educational needs has improved markedly and the school's tracking and assessment data and students' work indicate that these students are making consistently good progress across the school and achieving as well as their peers.
- In previous years, a few small groups of learners made less progress than other students. Notably, the small group of students eligible for pupil premium funding achieved average points scores (APS) below that of other students in school.
- The senior leadership team is systematically tackling this issue with pupil premium funding being used to provide specific interventions such as one-to-one tuition, targeted in-class support using learning support assistants, and smaller classes in Key Stage 4 in English and mathematics. Current performance indicates that this is already having a positive impact on students' progress but the school recognises that more needs to be done in ensuring support is targeted as quickly as possible and the impact of support and intervention strategies closely monitored and evaluated.
- A recently appointed literacy lead teacher is ensuring that high priority is given to developing students' literacy skills across all curriculum subjects. The school is implementing a range of initiatives to improve reading, writing and communication skills across the key stages. This is already having a positive impact on the quality of students' written and oral communication skills. Students read widely and there is a well-resourced, well-used library on site.
- A very small number of students are attending courses part time at a local college as part of the new Key Stage 4 pathways, accompanied and monitored by a teacher at the school. Feedback from the students is positive and students are currently making at least the progress expected at this stage in the course.
- The majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress made by their children.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching overall is good, with some outstanding teaching. These findings are endorsed by positive parent and student views.
- Mutual respect and support between teachers and students help to create positive attitudes to learning throughout the school.

- In the best lessons seen during the inspection, teachers used their expert subject knowledge to plan and deliver lively and engaging lessons matched to students' prior knowledge.
- The school's current focus on improving communication skills means that the group work observed was of a high quality and teachers used effective questioning to ensure that students of all abilities made progress.
- Teachers provide opportunities to challenge and inspire students and as a consequence, engagement levels are high. For example, during a mathematics lesson, groups of students were given a problem to solve, using specific resources under timed conditions. In a science lesson, the teacher used prior assessment data to plan a series of engaging activities leading to an extensive piece of high quality writing.
- In a history lesson, students were absorbed in group discussions regarding life in the middle ages, while the teacher and teaching assistant probed their perceptions in order to deepen their understanding. In a poetry lesson, Year 7 students were encouraged to talk at length about their opinions around a challenging text, responding to each other's views and participating in a genuine debate. After the debate, students completed a challenging and extensive piece of writing.
- The quality of marking and feedback is variable across departments. There are some excellent examples of detailed marking, giving clear next steps for learning and encouraging a dialogue between the students and the teachers. However, this is not consistent across all subjects and teachers.
- A few lessons observed during the inspection did not provide enough opportunities for students to work independently, at their own pace and on differentiated activities. As a result, in some lessons, all students were completing the same task at the same time, irrespective of their starting points. These lessons lacked pace, the activities were not challenging or interesting for a number of students, and consequently, progress was slow.
- Teaching assistants are deployed appropriately and students commented positively on the support they offer, both in and out of the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, and for students attending off-site provision is good. Students are respectful and courteous towards each other, working well in groups and respecting the views of others. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in a small minority of lessons, when the teaching lacks focus, some students show a lack of interest towards their learning.
- Students are proud of their school and their new house system, and this is reflected in their willingness to share their positive experience of school life during the inspection.
- Students feel safe and understand issues around their own safety.
- Responses from Parent View indicate that parents and carers believe their children enjoy school and are safe.
- Students are encouraged to celebrate differences and the staff work hard to encourage positive working relationships between students from a range of backgrounds and experiences. This is evident in students' confidence and mutual respect while working collaboratively in groups.
- The school has a range of effective policies and procedures regarding behaviour and bullying, all of which are understood and adhered to by both staff and students. Incidents are recorded and dealt with appropriately. 'The Hub' provides an effective response for those students needing some time for reflection while continuing with their studies.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and regularly explore the issues. During discussions with students, all felt confident that they would know what to do if they, or someone they knew, were being bullied and that it would be swiftly dealt with.
- Attendance is above the national average and procedures for ensuring good attendance are in place.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is well regarded by staff, students, parents, carers and governors and communicates her vision for the school very clearly within the local community. She, with the good support of other school leaders, plays an influential role in driving the school forward. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and discrimination of any kind not tolerated.
- The headteacher and other leaders in the school have worked hard to create positive relationships with parents, carers, local schools/colleges and external agencies. This is reflected in the very positive staff questionnaires and responses on Parent View.
- The performance management structure, linked to the national Teachers' Standards, is overseen by the headteacher and coordinated effectively by the deputy headteacher. Targets are linked to students' results and there is a clear link between the management of teachers' performance and individually tailored opportunities for professional development. The senior leadership team undertakes lesson observations as part of this process and this informs the whole school 'Learning Strategy'. However, opportunities are missed to share best practice across the school so that teaching and learning are further enhanced.
- The school has extensively reviewed provision at Key Stage 4 following a period of consultation and research. As a result, the current Year 10 is the first cohort of students to access new Key Stage 4 curriculum pathways. The pathways offer a range of subject choices and some pathways offer extended curriculum time in the core subjects of English and mathematics. As a result, more able students are offered a range of courses matching the subjects in the English baccalaureate, while others do fewer GCSE qualifications but make better progress because they are able to concentrate their efforts, especially on English and mathematics.
- The school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through assemblies and lessons is very good. The school actively promotes respect and understanding of cultural diversity. Students are taught to respect each other and the wider world through external links, charity events and a range of enrichment opportunities.
- The headteacher and governing body have just received confirmation that they can enter a period of formal consultation in order to become part of a Trust partnership with local primary schools. This partnership will be known as Culm Co-operative Learning Partnership.
- The senior leadership team works closely with the local authority School Improvement Partner, who was keen to share her positive experience of working with them during this period of rapid school improvement. The school have valued and benefited from the support offered.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance of the school is good with some outstanding aspects. The Chair and the governing body have a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and how the school performs when compared to other schools nationally. Governors have been instrumental in leading the school's strategic direction, including restructuring the senior leadership team and appointing the current headteacher a year ago. There is a clear vision for the future of the school, its place within the Co-operative Learning Partnership and within the wider community. The governing body has ensured that the school has reached a point of financial stability, efficiently managing resources and ensuring that teachers' salaries are aligned with their performance. The governing body is astutely clear about its role in holding the school to account and its statutory duties and accountabilities, particularly relating to students' safety. An effective training programme is in place for those new to the role. The Chair and headteacher regularly discuss the progress of groups who are underachieving and monitor the impact of pupil premium spending on student progress. The governing body, due to its collective expertise, an extremely effective Chair and strong working relationships with the senior leadership team, has the capacity to help move this school into the next stage of its ambitious journey.

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	113502
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	405475

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

Type of school	All-through
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	524
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Storey
Headteacher	Julie Phelan
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2011
Telephone number	01884 33364
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