

The Community College, Bishop's Castle

Brampton Road, Bishops Castle, SY9 5AY

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because students do not make good progress in all subjects in the school.
- Work is not always at the right level, so it is too hard for some students and too easy for others.
- Students do not always know what they need to do to improve their work from marking and in lessons so they can make good progress in all areas.
- When teachers question students they do not always build on students' responses to extend and probe their thinking.
- Opportunities for students to work in groups and to comment on their own and each other's work are limited.
- Leadership and management require improvement because although teaching and achievement are improving, leaders and governors have not made sure that they are good.
- There is not a clear and simple system to track students' progress that is used and understood by all so leaders and governors can monitor students' progress.
- Good practice in areas where standards are higher has not been effectively shared to raise standards in other areas across the school.
- The sixth form requires improvement because there is too much variation between subjects and teaching has not been strong enough for students to make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 and 5 are broadly average.
- Behaviour is good around the school and in lessons. Students feel safe in school and attendance is above average.
- The headteacher is aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school and has made sure staff morale has remained high and parental confidence has improved.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching in 27 lessons or part-lessons.
- Four observations were carried out jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also observed senior leaders feeding back to staff on students' learning and progress in lessons.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders, staff, members of the school's student senate and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors scrutinised the 47 responses to the online survey Parent View, the school's own parental questionnaires and considered individual correspondence from parents. Inspectors also took account of the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team looked at the school's work, the school's records of students' progress, documents relating to the management of the performance of staff, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Woodall

Additional Inspector

Stephen Howland

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The very large majority of students are White British.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and those from service families) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the national minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The school is part of a formal partnership with Ludlow College for sixth-form provision. Most Year 12 students are registered at Ludlow College and this provision did not form part of this inspection.
- The school uses local providers, including Walford College, to increase the curriculum opportunities for students.
- The school has gone through significant restructuring to reduce staffing levels since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - work is set at the right level for students so it is not too hard or too easy
 - students get clear feedback in marking and in lessons so they know how to improve their work
 - questioning builds on students' responses so it probes and extends thinking
 - students get opportunities to work in groups and to comment on their own and each other's work.
- Improve leadership and management and raise students' achievement by:
 - raising standards and accelerating progress by sharing good practice so students do as well in all subjects as they do in the best
 - developing a clear and simple system for tracking students' progress that is used and understood by all staff and enables leaders and governors to easily monitor the progress of students.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects. For example, students' progress is slower in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4 than in humanities and languages. This means that standards are also higher in some subjects than others.
- From broadly average starting points on entry to the school, the proportion of students achieving the national benchmark of five A*-C including English and mathematics is broadly average. This rose by seven per cent in 2012 to 57% and school tracking shows this is likely to rise by at least a further two percentage points this summer. The proportion of students gaining the English Baccalaureate improved last year to 35%, which is above national levels.
- The school has maintained a traditional curriculum focused on GCSE subjects with an increasing range of work-related options. The school works with other providers to provide specialist courses to suit students and their career aspirations. The school monitors the progress of students attending these courses to ensure they attend regularly and do as well as possible. The school enters students early for English at GCSE level and students can re-sit this again to get higher grades.
- In the sixth form there is a trend of slow improvement although A level results remain broadly average. There is a similar variation between subjects with the strongest performance in humanities, languages and English last year. This inconsistent picture between subjects and students making expected rather than good progress means achievement requires improvement.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive extra help in lessons and in small groups. Some of these students are making accelerated progress and the extra help and focused teaching is helping them to catch up. However, there are occasions when work isn't adjusted in lessons and these students find it too difficult so they do not make as much progress as they could.
- Students eligible for support from the pupil premium receive additional help in classes, in small groups and in funding for trips and transport so they have a full experience of school. In 2012, students eligible for support from the pupil premium were approximately one grade behind in English and one-and-a-third in mathematics. Although this gap did not narrow from the previous year, the school has focused more funding on academic support and these students are making better progress this year.
- Students eligible for support from the Year 7 catch-up programme have been given additional literacy support and help with reading as well as visits from staff before they joined the school to help them settle in. These students are making good progress. There is more to be done in the school to ensure all students make good progress and have equal opportunity for learning.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good across all subjects. There are examples of good and in some cases outstanding practice but not enough that is regularly good for students to make good progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure work is at the right level for students, it is sometimes pitched

at one level so it is too hard for some students and too easy for others. Often, it is pitched to the middle of the class, but occasionally it is pitched to the more-able students so it is too difficult for many students in the class.

- Marking does not always give students clear next steps so they know how to improve their work and teachers do not always give students feedback in lessons on how work can be improved. When questioning, teachers do not always ask follow-up questions to extend and probe thinking and to involve more students in these sessions. Students are not given regular opportunities to be more involved in their own learning and to work in groups or to comment on their own and each other's work.
- In the best teaching, such as in a Year 11 mathematics lesson on angles, the teacher used questioning expertly to extend students' thinking and to involve large numbers of students in reflecting on each other's answers. Students were challenged to use their prior knowledge and understanding of how to work out the dimensions of flat shapes to successfully calculate the size of solid shapes and made excellent progress.
- There are examples of strong teaching in the sixth form. For example, in a Year 13 business studies' lesson, the teacher used questioning well and involved students in discussion to share their ideas so they made good progress. Over time, teaching in the sixth form has not been strong enough in all subjects for students to make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in a range of teaching groups. The school's code of conduct, reporting and follow-up of any incidents has meant that behaviour has improved over time and the number of incidents of poor behaviour has declined. Students say behaviour has improved and they now know what is expected of them.
 - There is a focus on celebration with students being rewarded for success both academically and personally as well as acknowledging their interests such as music and horse riding. There is a 'student of the month' for each subject and a board which recognises students' achievements so all students can see how well they are doing.
 - The school promotes good relationships and a culture of tolerance where students are supportive of each other and feel valued. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Students are aware of different types of bullying including cyber or prejudice-based and say that this is not a problem in school. They say any incidents that do happen are minor. They are confident they can go to staff or to the headteacher for help. School records confirm their views are accurate.
 - The student senate supports a range of committees including the charity committee, the eco-committee and supports local community groups. Students are involved with 'Sports and Arts in the Community' and work with them on productions and are involved in the project supporting the restoration of the town hall.
 - Students say they feel safe and know about keeping themselves safe from hazards including using the internet and road safety. The vast majority of parents responding to the online survey agree. The school checks on students attending provision elsewhere to make sure they are safe and well cared for. Attendance has improved and is above average.
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The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement as teaching and achievement are not yet good. There is too much difference in how well students do in some subjects and best practice is not shared effectively across the school so students do as well in all subjects.
 - There are different systems for tracking students' progress which mean that leaders and governors do not know exactly how well groups of students are progressing overall and this means it is difficult to hold staff to account for how well students are progressing in their areas.
 - The headteacher has maintained staff morale through a difficult period for the school. The vast majority of staff responding to the questionnaire are positive about the leadership of the school. The school's own questionnaires show an improvement in the positive responses from parents about many different aspects of the school.
 - Self-evaluation is accurate, leaders are aware of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Improvement plans focus on these areas and are monitored regularly.
 - Performance management is in place and there is a strong link between salary progression and teachers meeting their targets. The improvement of teaching has been a focus for the school and this is improving.
 - The school has developed close links with local primary schools to support transition on entry. Staff visit primary schools regularly and primary school pupils visit for specialist tuition. There is also a partnership for post-16 to give students opportunities to study a wide range of courses. These partnerships and work with other providers have also increased the range of courses on offer for Key Stage 4. However, the leadership of the sixth form requires improvement as there is too much variation between subjects and teaching is not consistently good over time.
 - The curriculum supports students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well through the information, advice and guidance sessions and religious education. The school has a link with a school in Tanzania and supports a wide range of opportunities for students including horse riding, young engineers, and work on the physical and cultural renovation of the town hall.
 - The local authority has made support for the school a priority and has helped with self-evaluation and monitoring of its work. The local authority is working closely with the school to manage a difficult financial position.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have studied the published performance data on the school and are aware of how the school compares with other schools. They know about the quality of teaching in the school and where performance is less strong. They sign off pay awards for staff who meet their targets and are aware of where underperformance has been tackled. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and the difference this is making, although they realise there is more to do. Governors attend courses and share what they learn with all governors. Governors have links with faculty areas and visit to see for themselves what is happening in the school. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
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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	123564
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	406176

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	440
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	18
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Sparkes
Headteacher	Alan Doust
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2011
Telephone number	01588 638257
Fax number	01588 630034
Email address	admin.ccbc@shropshirelg.net

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