

West Craven High Technology College

Kelbrook Road, Barnoldswick, Lancashire, BB18 5TB

Inspection dates 22–23 October 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.

- In the large majority of lessons, teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is having a positive impact on students' learning.
- Given their starting points, almost all students make good progress throughout the college, in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Students are well cared for and say that they feel safe in the college. Parents overwhelmingly support this view.
- The behaviour of students and their attitudes to learning are good. Students are polite and well mannered.
- The attendance and punctuality of students are improving year-on-year. Attendance is above the national average.
- Students receive an interesting range of subjects and topics that ensures that they enjoy college. This contributes very effectively to their social and academic development and prepares them well for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear view about the strengths of the college and what needs to be done to improve it further. They have a strong focus on driving continued improvement of teaching and student achievement. As a result, they have already been successful in improving teaching and raising students' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few lessons require improvement, particularly for marking and ensuring work set meets students' needs. Not enough teaching is outstanding.
- College leaders and the governing body do not always check well enough the impact of their actions to ensure that students learn well, particularly those who join the college with lower literacy skills.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 27 teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with senior or middle leaders.
- Inspectors looked closely at the college’s work, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, the college’s analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan.
- The inspectors looked closely at the college’s information on students’ progress and students’ work, and documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding.
- Meetings were held with three groups of students, staff, two members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses from parents recorded in the online questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also took account of the 32 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Derek Davies	Additional Inspector
Jonathon Woodyatt	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- West Craven is much smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, those from families in the armed services and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of students supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college uses Craven College to provide some vocational courses for students in Years 10 and 11.
- The college uses Lancashire's Pupil Referral Unit to provide alternative off-site provision for some students.
- There is some major building and refurbishment work currently taking place on the college site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always at least consistently good and more of it is outstanding, by:
 - ensuring that activities are well planned and match the needs of all students to enable them to make rapid progress in their learning and achieve even greater success
 - ensuring that teachers' marking of students' work consistently provides students with clear and specific guidance on what they need to do to improve and that opportunities are always provided for students to respond to teachers' comments.
- Further improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - using even more rigorously and more frequently the information leaders have about the students' achievement, particularly with regard to students' literacy skills
 - checking the impact of the college's actions to raise achievement further and provide a deeper understanding of its performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' attainment on entry to the college in Year 7 is below the national average, with a significant number of students joining the college with reading and writing skills well below those expected for their age. From these low starting points, students make good progress to reach broadly average attainment.
- Over recent years, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C, including English and mathematics, has increased rapidly from 46% in 2010 to 59% in 2013 and is now in line with the national average. Current college information indicates that this upward trend will continue. This is confirmed by lesson observations and scrutiny of work during the inspection.
- The proportion of students making at least average progress in English fell in 2012 but remained above the national average. However, this decline was broadly in line with the fall seen nationally in English. In 2013, the proportions of students making at least average progress in English and those gaining A* to C grades were broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of students gaining the higher GCSE grades A* to A in English has increased year-on-year and is above the national average.
- In 2013, the results indicate that the proportions of students making average progress and good progress in mathematics have risen sharply to above national averages, having been significantly below national averages in 2012. The proportions of students gaining A* to C grades and those reaching the higher GCSE grades A* to A in mathematics have also increased at a greater rate than seen nationally and are close to national averages.
- The college entered all students early for their GCSE mathematics examinations in the November of their Year 11 year. Those achieving the highest grades, A*/A, benefit by going on to take an additional financial qualification and then begin the AS level mathematics course. All other students continue with their GCSE mathematics and most generally improve their grade.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language make similar, and sometimes better, progress to their peers.
- In 2011, at the start of their GCSE course, students known to be eligible for free school meals were achieving approximately three-quarters of a GCSE grade lower than all other students in the college in English, and approximately one GCSE grade lower in mathematics. At the end of their GCSE course in 2013, these same students achieved approximately one-quarter of a GCSE grade lower in English and one-half of a GCSE grade lower in mathematics. This shows that the gaps in attainment are closing. This is because the funding is well spent on additional staffing and activities to provide support to those students at risk of falling behind. Data for the current Year 11 show that these gaps are continuing to close.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium and those supported by the pupil premium receive additional support to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, the accelerated reading scheme for students in Years 7 and 8, together with the support given by older students, is having a positive impact on developing students' reading skills. However, the impact of the college's actions to develop students' literacy skills is not checked frequently enough to ensure that interventions are timely in order for students to make more rapid progress.
- The college data indicate that all students leaving the college in 2013 continued in education, training or employment. This demonstrates the college's commitment to prepare students well for the next stage of their life.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the best lessons, where sometimes outstanding teaching was seen, teaching is very well organised and planned. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, use effective

questioning to encourage students to think for themselves and develop their understanding. In these lessons, students are keen to learn and make good progress.

- Students say they enjoy their lessons and feel that they are well taught in the vast majority of them. The good relationships between students and teachers and between students themselves promote positive attitudes to learning and enable students to get on with their work well.
- In some outstanding lessons, enthusiastic teaching engaged students fully in their learning. For example, in a Year 7 drama lesson to explore the use of space and non-verbal communication, students worked enthusiastically and supported each other's learning well.
- Teaching is less effective when teachers do not always plan tasks and activities that enable all students to learn well and make rapid progress, whatever their ability. This is because the activities are either too easy for some or too hard for other students.
- In some lessons, teachers promote students' literacy development through, for example, activities that involve extended writing. However, this is not consistent across all areas and opportunities are sometimes missed to develop students' reading and writing skills further.
- Some marking of students' work by teachers is good and provides students with clear and specific written comments that tell them what they need to do to improve further. However, this good practice is not consistently applied across all subject areas. In addition, opportunities are not provided to ensure that students follow up teachers' written comments. As a result, opportunities to take learning further are missed.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively and make a significant contribution to students' learning, particularly to support disabled students and those who have special educational needs. They help students to learn, develop skills and achieve well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are polite and courteous to one another, staff and visitors. The relationship between students and teachers and between students themselves is good. Behaviour in a very large majority of lessons and around the college is good. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that the instances of any poor behaviour in classrooms are reducing over time too. This promotes positive attitudes to learning and helps to make learning enjoyable and effective.
- Students say they feel very safe in college. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example, learning about personal safety and how to use the internet safely.
- The responses to Parent View indicate that a very large majority of parents agree that students behave well, that they are not bullied, that they are well cared for and that they feel safe at the college.
- The college provides opportunities for students to develop responsible attitudes. For example, some students take on positions of responsibility such as prefects, as members of the student council, as literacy mentors to help younger students improve their reading skills, or taking on the leadership role in organising events. This helps to promote well students' confidence and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students also raise money for charities, such as Children in Need, the shoebox appeal and Pendle Hospice.
- Over the last three years, attendance has continued to improve and is currently above the national average. The college has successfully implemented strategies to reduce the number of persistent absences. Punctuality has also improved since the previous inspection.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governing body have accurately identified the college's strengths and areas for further improvement. They demonstrate a strong commitment to raise standards further and have a clear focus on raising attainment by improving the quality of teaching. The recent approaches already implemented are successfully improving the quality of teaching. As a result, students are learning at a faster rate. This track record demonstrates that

the college is well placed to improve further.

- The information gained from observing lessons and monitoring the quality of teaching is used to provide a relevant programme of staff training. It is also used well by the headteacher when advising the governing body about teachers' pay awards.
- Although systems and processes are in place to check the quality of teaching and students' achievement, they have not been used rigorously enough to provide a deeper understanding of the college's performance. For example, systems to check the impact of the college's actions to support and improve students' reading skills from when they join the college in Year 7 are not used frequently enough.
- The courses and opportunities offered to students meet their interests well and prepare them fully for the next stage of their education, training or employment. The college's wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities provides students with opportunities and experiences to develop their personal and academic skills further and helps promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The college makes very good use of alternative provision for some students to provide appropriate courses and work placements that enable them to be successful. The attendance of students on college courses and work placements is good and the college takes all reasonable steps to ensure students behave well and are safe.
- College leaders are managing the disruption caused by the current building work skilfully. They make sure it does not impact on students' learning and that revised systems are in place to ensure students' safety. Students behave sensibly in moving around the college site when access is sometimes restricted.
- The college receives very effective support and advice from its sponsors and other external advisers on teaching and learning, curriculum development and training for governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the strengths of the college and has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done to improve the college further. Governors give good support and challenge to senior leaders and pay appropriate attention to the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay. The governing body has a good understanding of the college's finances. Although governors have a good understanding of the pupil premium funding and Year 7 catch-up premium, they do not check frequently enough the impact of the college's actions to improve the quality of teaching and students' achievement, particularly the development of students' literacy skills. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet the statutory requirements.

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	119725
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426186

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	488
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Sterratt
Headteacher	Arnold Kuchartschuk
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2011
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