

Holsworthy Community College

Victoria Hill, Holsworthy, Devon, EX22 6JD

Inspection dates 30–31 January 2014

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.

- Since its previous inspection, the college has improved significantly. The Principal and his leadership team have ensured that students are taught well and make good progress.
- Achievement in science and English is particularly high and students now also achieve good standards in mathematics.
- Teachers and support staff know students exceptionally well and use precise information about their progress to guide their learning.
- Students with special educational needs and those who are eligible for the pupil premium funding are particularly well supported so that they achieve well and are given equal opportunities.
- The improvements in teaching and learning have resulted from the determined drive and clear vision of the Principal and his senior leadership team. A rigorous system to monitor teaching and learning has been introduced which is supported by a well-matched training programme.
- The college runs smoothly on a daily basis. Students are polite and respectful to each other. The few incidents of disruptive behaviour are managed well and the school is safe for all.
- Governors work closely with senior leaders so that they have a very precise understanding of the strengths of the college and areas for development. They ensure that the college's priorities are addressed within the federation.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not all teachers give students precise enough marking guidance because it does not always indicate what students have to do to improve.
- Teaching in some lessons does not always give students, particularly the more able, sufficient opportunities to achieve at the highest levels.
- Careers guidance does not always encourage students to aim high enough.

Information about this inspection

- Holsworthy Community College is a foundation school with a cooperative Trust. It is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- It is part of a federation with three local primary schools: Bridgerule Church of England Primary, Pyworthy Primary and Bradford Primary. There is one governing body.
- Most students are of White British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of students for whom the college receives the pupil premium (additional funding from the government for looked after children, students known to be eligible for free school meals and children of service families) is below average.
- Nearly all the curriculum is taught on the college site although a few students access vocational courses at the adjacent Skills Centre or at Launceston and Duchy Colleges.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students’ attainment and progress.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Joanna Peach	Additional Inspector
Richard Steward	Additional Inspector
Marian Marks	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Inspectors observed parts of 38 lessons, many of which were with senior leaders. They also observed an assembly and visited tutor times.
- They held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors met with three groups of students to listen to their views of the college and also talked to students around the college during breaks.
- A wide range of evidence was examined including the college's own analysis of how well it is doing and its plans for improvement. Policies, safeguarding documentation and minutes of meetings, including those held by governors, were also examined.
- The views of parents, carers and staff were considered including 87 responses on Parent View and 58 staff questionnaires.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the best teaching and support strategies already in the college, and so secure outstanding achievement for students through:
 - ensuring that when teachers mark work, they always give clear and precise written advice on how students can improve their work and then check that students follow up on that advice to make the best progress
 - providing all students, particularly the more able, with opportunities to tackle more difficult work so that they gain confidence and achieve at the highest levels
 - ensuring that careers information and guidance are of a high quality and focus on encouraging students throughout the college to aim high when considering their future options.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- There has been a rise in achievement over the last two years and there is reliable evidence that this trend will continue.
- Examination results have significantly improved, particularly in mathematics where achievement is now good. The proportion of students who were awarded at least five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has risen and is now in line with the national average.
- Achievement is outstanding in science and English. Results were lower in geography, religious studies and resistant materials but in conjunction with the local authority, the college has recently made some improvements to the teaching of these subjects. While most students made good progress, results in 2013 showed that as a group, students who joined the college with low standards of achievement did not progress so well. This has been addressed by college leaders and good teaching ensures that this group of students now achieve very well.
- The most able group of students achieved a higher proportion of the top grades last year compared with previous years. Some students however, particularly the more able, do not have enough opportunities to tackle more difficult work so that they gain confidence and achieve at the highest levels.
- Students who are disabled or who have special educational needs are particularly well supported so that they make at least good progress.
- Those who are eligible for the pupil premium also achieve well although gaps remain between their achievement and that of others. Gaps are closing however, especially in English where the gaps are smaller than those seen nationally. In both English and mathematics, students in this group achieved less than a GCSE grade lower on average than other students and the percentage that made expected progress is nearly the same as for all students.
- Students currently in the college who are eligible for the pupil premium or Year 7 catch-up funding are achieving in line with others because of the help that teachers give them.
- The proportion of boys joining the college with lower achievement levels is greater than that of girls. Boys also achieved less well in their examinations. The college has worked hard to reduce this gender gap. For example, there are separate English lessons for boys and girls in Year 11. Boys in the college now make similar progress to girls.
- The college's policy of entering students into GCSEs early in English and mathematics and then re-entering some to achieve higher grades does not appear to have disadvantaged students. The number of A grades has increased. This policy has now changed so that students only take examinations once.
- The very few students who attend off-site provision enjoy the well-taught vocational courses such as hairdressing and construction and achieve in line with expectations.

The quality of teaching is good

- Since the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching. This is because of the determined efforts of college leaders to ensure teaching and learning are always at least good.
- The information about how well each student is learning is extensive and frequently updated, enabling teachers to plan lessons that help students to make good progress.
- Teaching is now typically good. It is often outstanding, especially in science, English, art and physical education. For example, multi-sensory approaches used in science helped students to understand the properties of materials. Tablet computers are used effectively in games lessons to analyse movement.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics has particularly improved so that students can understand the basic steps required to move on to the next level of difficulty.

- Teachers structure lessons well and have good subject knowledge. They are skilful in asking questions that probe students' understanding. Although teachers help all groups of students to make good progress, they do not always motivate students to succeed at the highest levels and equip them with the skills and confidence to do so.
- Where teaching is outstanding, work is marked regularly ensuring that students have a clear indication of how to improve. However this practice is not applied consistently across the college and some teachers do not give clear and precise advice on how students can improve their work and then check that students follow up on that advice to make the best progress.
- The strategies used to support students with special educational needs are very effective and teaching assistants are now used well within lessons to guide student learning in partnership with the teacher. Pupil premium and Year 7 catch-up funding has been used very effectively to reduce class sizes and increase support.
- Literacy levels are strong in this college and are driven by a skilled English department. Spelling and punctuation are checked in other subject areas although not always consistently so. Students read well and there are very effective programmes in place to help those students who join the college with low reading and spelling ages. Numeracy is promoted well through social media, mathematics parent evenings and joint curriculum projects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. They are friendly, polite and say that they enjoy college life. They move around the site in a calm and orderly way. There is very little litter and students generally treat the buildings and environment with respect. Uniform requirements are broadly adhered to although some older students wear shoes that do not strictly adhere to the rules.
- Students usually arrive punctually to lessons and bring the correct equipment. They follow instructions carefully and generally comply with the expectations of teachers.
- Attendance levels have been just below the national average although are improving this year. College leaders work hard to encourage students to attend, engaging parents and carers particularly well through the parent support advisors and education welfare officer.
- The management of behaviour is characterised by prompt and swift action to deal with anything that is likely to disrupt learning or the well-being of students. There are few fixed-term exclusions and effective local partnerships provide support when necessary.
- Behaviour is not yet judged to be outstanding because staff, students, parents and carers say that there remain a few cases of bullying and disruptive behaviour. These are usually dealt with swiftly and successfully. Restorative justice procedures are used effectively although not all students value the principles of these methods and consider that some incidents have not been dealt with severely enough.
- Discriminatory behaviour or language is rare and students are aware of why it is unacceptable. Because the college is small, there is a 'family feel' within the community and this is characterised by students' kindness to each other. The vertical tutor group system has been particularly effective in reducing barriers between year groups.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures are strong. Partnerships with health and social care professionals contribute a great deal to the quality of care for students who are vulnerable in different ways.
- Health and safety matters are given a high priority by governors and college leaders and the high standards achieved have been confirmed by the local authority audits. This extends to ensuring that students who attend courses off site are kept safe and behave well.
- E-safety is given a high priority in the college, particularly in information and communication technology lessons. As a result of this, there are few cases of online bullying and students are aware of the risks involved in internet use.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the Principal has successfully restored good teaching and learning to the college by working in partnership with his very able and enthusiastic senior leadership team and focused governing body. His determined and robust approaches to improving teaching have resulted in a rise in GCSE results and consistently good learning throughout the college.
- Achievement in mathematics had been low but the Principal has overcome difficulties in staffing to restore good teaching and learning in this subject. College leaders have also sustained and embedded outstanding practice in science and English.
- Further improvement is still needed in some subject areas to secure outstanding teaching and learning overall and this is being addressed through leadership development including the sharing of best practice.
- The contribution of middle leaders to the vision of raising standards of teaching and learning has been substantial, although occasionally books have not been regularly checked to ensure that teachers' marking gives students high-quality guidance to improve.
- Financial factors have forced a reduction in the number of teaching staff and the breadth of the curriculum, but the quality of education has not been compromised. Furthermore, the college remains very inclusive, offering equal opportunities and ensuring that no group is discriminated against.
- The curriculum is focused on academic achievement to give students the best preparation for their futures. The reduction in vocational options has disappointed some students but pathways remain for those students for whom vocational routes are most appropriate. These include work experience opportunities for Year 10 students next year.
- There is a range of extra-curricular activities mainly focusing on sport after school. Visits and activities are arranged for more-able students such as visits to universities and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ).
- Both within and outside of the curriculum, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well established. For example, Year 11 students discuss euthanasia in religious studies lessons and in Year 7 they discuss how to make their environment more sustainable. A superb student-led assembly celebrating the arrival of the Chinese New Year enhanced cultural development.
- The local authority has provided substantial support for the college to help it improve and this has been valued highly by senior leaders and governors.
- The partnership between parents and carers and the college is positive and has supported improvements. Similarly, the college is well supported by local organisations and businesses.
- The partnerships created with the primary schools within the federation have enhanced transition and improved communication and understanding between the two sectors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is responsible for all the schools in the federation but there is a small group of governors who focus on the secondary college. These governors are very knowledgeable. They make frequent visits and have been very much involved in the college's journey since the last inspection. Excellent information from senior leaders enables them to ask pertinent questions and clarify issues so that they effectively monitor improvements in teaching and learning. This year they will start to take a more active role in ensuring that only teachers who perform well receive pay rises.
 - All statutory requirements are met and governors are well trained for their different roles. Because the college is small and there is a demographic decline in numbers, governors have had to make some difficult financial decisions. Because of this, they have had to rigorously analyse expenditure and prioritise spending on only the most effective strategies.

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	113511
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	431189

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	624
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Lee Rose
Headteacher	David Fitzsimmons
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2012
Telephone number	01409 253430
Fax number	01409 253121
Email address	admin@holsworthycollege.devon.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

