School report

The Henry Cort Community College

Hillson Drive, Fareham, Hampshire, PO15 6PH

Inspection dates	27–28 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Students achieve well in this college. Most make at least good progress from starting points that are often low. An increasing number are making outstanding progress.
- Almost a third of students achieve the English Baccalaureate qualification, a much higher proportion than average. This reflects their success in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and, particularly, the very high levels of achievement in French.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers form very good relationships with their classes and students work hard because they want to do well.
- College leaders and staff create a harmonious and respectful environment. Behaviour is generally good and students are usually courteous and show consideration for others.
- Students are kept very safe and leaders provide well-established care and support for them. The vertical tutor group and house system is a strength of the college.
- The executive and associate principals work closely with other senior leaders to provide secure direction for the college. They have made many improvements to teaching, learning and behaviour and have clear plans to tackle areas which still need attention.
- Most subject leaders closely monitor the work of the teachers in their departments to ensure that students are taught well and are helped to improve.
- Governors are very clear on their role, particularly in regards to monitoring how well students are achieving. They have exceptionally strong financial skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some teachers do not give students the necessary work and feedback to enable them to achieve at the highest level possible.
- A minority of subject area leaders are not sufficiently rigorous in checking that teaching is of the highest standard.
- The extra help given to students entitled to extra funding has not yet enabled them to achieve similar GCSE grades to others of the same abilities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 32 lessons, some of which were jointly observed with members of the senior leadership team. They visited tutor times and watched an assembly.
- They looked at students' work both in lessons and separately. They held meetings with four groups of students of different ages and abilities and talked to others around the school in breaks and within classes.
- They had meetings with college leaders, staff and members of the governing body. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- A wide range of documents were read by inspectors, including college policies, its self-evaluation and plans for improvement, student achievement summaries, records of behaviour and attendance and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of the 143 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online parent survey), one parent letter and also 55 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jacqueline Goodall, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Fran Ashworth	Additional inspector
Christopher Dowsett	Additional inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Henry Cort Community College is slightly smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Most students are White British. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below the national average and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Around a fifth of students are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and children from armed service families. This is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those with special educational needs supported through school action is low compared with other schools. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is just above the national average, however.
- Around one in six students joining the college is entitled to the Year 7 catch-up funding, which is for students who did not achieve the expected levels in reading and mathematics at the end of primary school.
- Beginning this academic year, a new part-time role of executive principal was introduced by governors. To support him in this role, there is a full-time associate principal. The executive principal is a local leader in education (LLE).
- Alternative vocational courses are provided through the SkillForce educational charity and also a Skills Academy course at Fareham College.
- The college offers flexible learning through its 'Day 10' provision, when a range of activities and events are arranged on alternate Fridays.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to match the very best in the college so that most students, including those entitled to extra funding, make outstanding progress by:
  - ensuring that teachers always provide activities which help students of all abilities to make rapid progress from their individual starting points, including in science
  - extending the best practice in marking to all subject areas, so that every student receives regular, detailed information about the next steps needed in their learning for them to make rapid progress
  - ensuring that all subject area leaders regularly check that teaching and learning in their departments are of the highest quality.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- More students than average join the college with literacy and numeracy skills and abilities that are below levels typical for their age. As a result of good teaching, most leave in Year 11 having achieved well.
- Following a dip in GCSE achievement in 2012, there has been a drive to improve teaching and learning. Consequently, in 2013, the percentage of students gaining five or more good grades at GCSE including in English and mathematics rose and was above the national average.
- A higher proportion than that seen nationally gained the English Baccalaureate qualification. This meant that they had gained good grades in English, mathematics, science, history or geography and languages. Achievement in French was particularly high.
- In 2013, students did not achieve as well in science as they did in English and mathematics. This was because of a change from the BTEC qualification to the more difficult GCSE course and also because some teachers had left. To restore good teaching and learning to this subject, college leaders have recruited more teachers and improved leadership.
- Students entitled to extra government funding achieve less well than others. In 2013, these students attained on average around one and a half GCSE grades below their classmates in both English and mathematics. There are clear indications in the school's tracking information that from 2014, the progress of current students in this group will enable them to achieve GCSE results more in line with others.
- The achievement of students who are disabled or who have special educational needs is also rising in line with that of other students, although further in-class support would enable them to make more rapid progress.
- More-able students are reaching the highest levels of achievement in many subjects, especially in English and languages, but the college needs to ensure that best practice in meeting the needs of these students is extended to all subjects, including science.
- Students who attend vocational courses off-site achieve very well. They are motivated to learn and enjoy the challenges of learning new work-related skills.
- College leaders have reduced the use of early entry to GCSE examinations. They have found that while it benefits some students, it has not always resulted in the highest achievement possible.
- Reading is promoted widely within the college and literacy is strong. In Year 7, catch-up funding is used to provide extra literacy and numeracy support within lessons and through breakfast and after-school clubs. These have helped to improve skills and build confidence.
- There are numerous competitions to encourage reading, spurred on by one boy's success in reading over three million words by the spring half-term. Students also develop good writing skills, although there is some variation in the quality of writing in different subject areas.
- Numeracy skills are increasingly promoted. For example, students' mathematical skills such as drawing graphs and working out percentages are further developed in geography and science.

The quality of teaching is good

- There has been a sustained drive to improve teaching and while there are still areas to be developed, this has resulted in higher GCSE results and a good standard of teaching throughout the college.
- Teaching is typically good because teachers plan interesting lessons that engage students, building on previous learning to help them understand key principles and themes. Lessons are generally calm and focused.
- Teaching in languages, English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education is often particularly strong. This is because teachers are skilled in planning activities that help students of all abilities and with different needs to make rapid progress. They regularly tell students clearly

how to improve.

- Older students said that this excellent practice does not happen in all lessons, however, and, therefore, they are not always clear about the next steps in their learning. Students said that helpful feedback was one of the most important factors in helping them to achieve the highest levels possible and they would like this to happen in all lessons.
- More-able students are appreciative of the way in which they are encouraged, supported and challenged to achieve their best in most lessons.
- The college is inclusive and is dedicated to helping all students to succeed. Extra funding is used to reduce class sizes, give individuals or small groups additional help and invest in alternative courses where they are motivated and taught skilfully so that they achieve well. Students joining the college in Year 7 with low levels of achievement are supported particularly well to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.
- There is some very effective support for students with special educational needs. There is some very good practice in teaching assistant support but an increase in the numbers of assistants would enable more students to make outstanding progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Around the college students are lively but considerate. There is very little litter and no graffiti was seen. Most students are proud of their recently changed uniforms, including ties, and wear them smartly. A few were less tidy or wore trainers, but students know that there are clear consequences for not adhering to rules.
- Within lessons, students usually arrive on time and have the correct equipment. They settle down quickly, responding well to their teachers' high expectations. They follow instructions and carry out activities without fuss, and only a few lessons are affected by low-level disruption, chiefly when lessons are less interesting. Younger students are sometimes over exuberant when their enthusiasm is managed less well.
- Where teaching is good or better, work in students' books is usually well presented and tidy. In some lessons, however, not so much care is taken and untidy work is not challenged.
- Where teaching was outstanding, students are actively encouraged to be proactive in thinking for themselves and to guide their own learning so that they are prepared well for further and higher education. The college's 'purple pen' policy when used well enables students to engage in learning conversations to help them make greater progress.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good. Governors and senior leaders adhere to high standards in safeguarding when recruiting and training staff. The college site is secure and students are helped to understand how to keep themselves safe. There is clear and substantial guidance on safety when using the internet both for students in lessons and for parents on the college website.
- Bullying is managed effectively and although a few parents who responded to Parent View expressed concerns about student behaviour and bullying, the college has improved standards of behaviour. The college strives hard to enable students to learn in a happy environment free from discrimination; students know that racist or homophobic language is unacceptable. The number of exclusions has reduced.
- Attendance has improved, although students entitled to pupil premium funding attend less well. This is a high priority for the college and there is a continuing focus on establishing effective relationships with parents to promote attendance.
- The behaviour and safety of students who attend off-site courses are managed very well, with good communication between establishments. Attendance is good for these students, and because students are enthusiastic about their courses, behaviour is also good.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive and associate principals work in partnership with other senior leaders and the community to maintain a happy and well-ordered community, securely founded on the four pillars of achievement, engagement, enterprise and respect.
- Leaders have demonstrated a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college and there is a continual focus on improving teaching and learning. Training for teachers is good and they have secured a rise in GCSE results, which are above average nationally. Their capacity to improve the college further is good.
- Achievement is good or better in most subjects but the improvements made to the science department have yet to impact fully on GCSE results. College predictions of results for the next two years indicate that achievement in science will rise because students are now being prepared better for their GCSE courses.
- Senior and most middle leaders track student progress well by scrutinising achievement, checking student work and monitoring standards of teaching. A small minority of subject leaders are less effective in ensuring that only the highest standards of teaching are accepted.
- The range of subjects provided at the college meets the needs of all students well. There is a good balance of GCSE and high quality vocational courses that enables all students to move on to the next stage of their education successfully. Students receive well-structured careers guidance and very few students do not move on to education, training or employment.
- On the fortnightly flexible learning days known as 'Day 10', students undertake GCSE assessments, attend visits and trips, and focus on a variety of curriculum topics.
- Students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is effectively promoted through the curriculum. For example, Year 9 students learn more about oppression by studying poetry about Tiananmen Square in English lessons, Year 7 students engage with the issues of smoking on a 'Day 10', and art and music are promoted well. All students study religious education and achieve well in their GCSE examinations.
- There are many activities after school, including a wide range of sport, in keeping with the college's specialism, and the highly successful Rock Challenge. College leaders responded to students' concerns about getting home after their clubs by arranging a late bus.
- On Parent View, a large majority of parents showed support for college leaders in their work. There are regular coffee mornings for parents to meet with leaders to discuss concerns.
- Safeguarding is a high priority for college leaders and governors. All statutory duties are met and governors are rigorous in their safeguarding responsibilities. There is a determination to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination in all areas.
- The relationship between this college and the local authority is particularly strong, although support for the college is light touch. The executive principal contributes his expertise to other schools in his role as local leader in education.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are ambitious for the college and have taken steps to secure a range of expertise to equip them for their role. Well-established and new governors provide significant experience, especially in finance, and there is an enthusiasm to gain as much training as possible.
  - There has been a concerted effort to get to grips with achievement data so that they can challenge college leaders to explain any of their concerns. In particular, they are keeping a close eye on the achievement of students entitled to extra funding, and one governor is tasked to ensure that closing gaps in achievement is given a high priority by all. They have a sound general appreciation of the quality of teaching.
  - Governors are very clear about their role in checking how well college leaders monitor the quality of teaching and are prepared well for their increased role in ensuring that increases in salary are linked to student achievement.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	116466
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	441029

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	890
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	John Robinson
Headteacher	Philip Munday
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2011
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