

# The Community College, Bishop's Castle

Brampton Road, Bishops Castle, SY9 5AY

**Inspection dates** 23–24 April 2015

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher and school leaders have created an improving school that responds to the needs of students. Through broadening their horizons and working well with others, students are successfully prepared for their future lives.
- All students, including the most able, make good progress in English and mathematics and across a wide range of other subjects. This is because they have positive attitudes to learning.
- Standards in humanities and languages have been consistently above the national average.
- Achievement is typically good in all year groups because of consistently good teaching. This has improved as a result of carefully targeted training and support by school leaders.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive a good level of care and support and make similar progress to other students.
- The gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others, both in the school and nationally, have narrowed markedly in the last three years.
- Governors have worked closely with school leaders to improve the quality of teaching and raise achievement.
- Strong support for literacy skills and a popular library at the heart of the school have led to students developing a love of reading.
- The school's work in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students leads to good behaviour and a happy and safe school environment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' questioning is not always sufficiently sharp to deepen students' learning.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities to learn from each other's best practice.
- The school's marking policy is not consistently applied throughout the school to accelerate students' progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students' learning in 28 lessons across the school. Of these, eight were observed jointly with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books and folders.
- As well as conversations in lessons and at social times during the inspection, discussions were held with three groups of students about the quality of their educational experiences and the standard of behaviour in the school. The inspectors also held meetings with senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 93 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 36 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information on students' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching. They analysed records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Nicholas Horn

Additional Inspector

Lynn Stanbridge

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The Community College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after children and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 11.
- A very small number of students attend full-time provision off the school site through the Thomas Telford School, Telford and the Tuition Medical Behaviour Support Service (TMBSS), Shropshire.
- The school is a partner in the South West Shropshire Learning Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has ceased to have any sixth form students on the school roll.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and so accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that:
  - all teachers ask challenging questions of students in lessons in order to encourage deeper thinking and to develop more considered written responses
  - the best teaching practice already found in the school is regularly shared among all teachers.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring consistent use of the school's marking policy across all subject areas and key stages so that students are always clear what they need to do to improve.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Parents, staff, students and governors are agreed that the calm and purposeful authority of the headteacher has transformed this school. He has surrounded himself with a talented and committed team of school leaders. Together, they have shown determination and modelled high expectations. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching, in students' attitudes to learning and to the raising of students' achievement.
- The improvements in the quality of teaching stem from the high quality of monitoring by school leaders. There has been a supportive but rigorous approach to any underperformance, and the needs of the students have always been paramount. This determination to improve the quality of education has been supported by governors and has led to considerable changes in staffing and the eradication of inadequate teaching. This track record, together with the good progress of students currently on roll, clearly shows the capacity of leaders to make further improvements.
- School policies, including on assessment and behaviour, have been consistently and successfully implemented and have led to improvements in students' attitudes to learning and the fostering of good relations between students, staff and the wider community. The school's marking policy has yet to be adopted by all teachers with the same degree of consistency.
- Senior leaders and managers are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They take full advantage of the school's relatively small size not only to create a friendly and secure environment but also to analyse the progress of individual students. This leads to accurate and reliable information that helps to identify and remedy any underachievement. This includes ensuring equality of opportunity and effectively tackling discrimination, for example through the well-targeted spending of the pupil premium.
- The headteacher has successfully introduced a number of innovations to the curriculum that are having a positive impact on students' engagement and achievement. 'Aspiration Fridays' and a comprehensive 'enrichment' programme of additional activities add breadth and depth to students' experience of school life. The daily 'coaching' programme means that older and younger students benefit from working with each other and are given individualised targets to help to raise their achievement. Staff 'coaches' are also trained in supporting students' literacy and numeracy development. The strength of both French and Spanish at the school and students' enthusiasm for reading also add to the success of the school's curriculum.
- Staff receive carefully targeted training and support from school leaders and have access to regional and national expertise. However, there are currently few opportunities for teachers to share their best practice with each other.
- The school promotes well students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This leads to a safe and happy school. Talks by visitors in assemblies and educational visits promote understanding of the diversity of modern Britain and an understanding of fundamental British values. Students are knowledgeable about democracy and the rule of law and demonstrate an appreciation of the values of tolerance and free speech in debates in class and in their interactions around the school.
- Independent and impartial advice on careers, training and further education is available to all students from Year 7 onwards. Significant partnerships play a key role in raising the aspirations of students and broadening their horizons. This is particularly evident in the school's role as a partner in a trust that includes twelve local schools. This has also led to smooth and effective transitions from primary school and a shared approach to new ways of assessing students' progress. The school has a strong working relationship with the local authority which has an increasingly 'light touch' approach to the school. This is in recognition of the capacity of its leaders and managers to secure further improvement.
- The school meets all requirements to safeguard the well-being of its students. All staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding, and effective procedures are in place.

- The very small number of students who attend provision off the school site achieve well and school leaders check their progress, attendance and behaviour carefully.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance is effective. Governors have worked closely with school leaders to raise achievement and to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. They are well informed about the school's work, the quality of teaching and the pace of improvement. They hold school leaders fully to account and understand data, evaluating the school's performance in relation to other schools nationally. They have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and have supported the headteacher in tackling any underperformance. Governors ensure that pay increases are closely aligned to teachers' performance targets.
- Governors are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity, tackling discrimination and promoting good relationships. For example, they ensure the pupil premium funding and the Year 7 catch-up funding are well spent and analyse their impact on students' achievement. They ensure, together with school leaders, that statutory duties are met, including those for keeping students safe. They have prudently managed the school's finances during a challenging period in the school's history and have been closely involved in securing additional funds for the school library.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Students have positive attitudes to their lessons. They learn not to give up in the face of challenges and to support one another. This focus on collaborative work is further developed in their weekly 'enrichment' sessions in which they do a wide range of often practical activities. The voluntary, but well-attended, 'Aspiration Friday' talks from visitors provide further opportunities to broaden their horizons.
- Older students are unanimous in their approval of the ongoing improvements in behaviour since the arrival of the headteacher four years ago. Staff apply sanctions and give rewards fairly and consistently.
- The school's inclusion room is well used for students needing to withdraw from lessons or activities without falling behind in their work. This is an example of the close link between the excellent pastoral care that students receive and strategies to help them raise their achievement. There are examples of students overcoming considerable barriers to make good progress in their studies.
- Relationships between staff and students are strong, and students say they appreciate the extra help and support they receive, particularly in the recently introduced daily 'coaching' sessions.
- Uniform is worn with pride and students dress smartly and show respect for the school environment. They are pleasant, polite and courteous and are well behaved around school, socialising well together.
- Students say they enjoy coming to school and they arrive punctually in the morning and for lessons. They come well equipped for their lessons and ready to learn. Attendance is in line with the national average and has improved since the previous inspection. The number of permanent and temporary exclusions from school has fallen markedly in the last three years.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All students spoken to said they felt safe in the school.
- Students are clear as to what constitutes bullying or the use of discriminatory language, and they know that any anti-social behaviour is not tolerated. Parents and students say that, on the rare occasions bullying occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- Volunteers run a well-used and effective lunchtime 'sanctuary' that offers more vulnerable students a calm

environment and the opportunity to have quiet, reflective time. This means they are well prepared for their afternoon lessons.

- Students have a good understanding of internet safety, and the school's programme for personal and social development makes a strong contribution to students' understanding of how to keep safe.
- Arrangements to support the few students studying off site are good. There are clear arrangements with providers to check the safety and attendance of students.
- Parents and staff share similarly positive views about students' behaviour and safety.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching is good and over time it results in students' good progress throughout the school.
- Teachers know their subjects and their students well. They ensure that students know the purpose of their learning and frequently remind them so that they achieve the aim of the lesson.
- Most teachers have high expectations of their students, who respond by working hard. Teachers find opportunities to reinforce students' literacy and numeracy skills in a wide range of subjects. These skills are also refined in the 'coaching' groups at the end of each day. Reading is promoted well across the school.
- Students are very positive in their comments about lessons. They find them interesting and enjoy the homework they are regularly set. The most able students find work challenging and engaging. However, teachers' questioning is not always probing enough to accelerate students' progress.
- Students' work is marked regularly and mostly follows the school's marking policy in giving students helpful information about what to do to improve. However, this is not yet the case throughout the school or in all subjects. Discussions with students and a scrutiny of their books reveal that some teachers' marking is predominantly celebratory and lacks clear advice and guidance.
- Teachers are very aware of the needs and potential barriers to learning of different groups of students in their classes. This includes disabled students and those who have special educational needs as well as disadvantaged students. Teachers make good use of experienced and expert support staff to assist these students and others in their learning.
- While teachers make good use of the training and support given by school leaders, they have yet to share their best practice between themselves on a regular basis.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Achievement has improved since the previous inspection as the impact of changes made by senior leaders has become evident. The school's information about current students' progress and a scrutiny of students' books show that progress is good and improving further.
- The school has not had a regular policy of entering students early for examinations in English or mathematics. However, early entry was used as a specific strategy in 2014 in the best interests of a particular group of students. Many had left primary school with low attainment and were less mature in their attitudes to their learning. Early entry was successfully used to motivate them and to give examination experience. Both lower- and higher-achieving students attained considerably improved results on re-taking some of their examinations. The nationally published data for 2014 does not, however, reflect this success.
- Students leave the school with standards that are broadly in line with those found nationally. This

represents good progress from starting points which have been below average when students entered Year 7. In humanities and in languages, standards have been above the national average since the last inspection.

- Progress in mathematics and English is good. Students develop particularly strong literacy and communication skills across the curriculum. The Year 7 catch-up funding is very well used to provide expert support for those who start with weaker literacy skills. Reading is actively promoted, and the exceptionally well-resourced and well-managed library is at the heart of the school's success in encouraging a love of books.
- The learning of the most able students in mathematics and English is good. They make good progress because teachers have high expectations and students are highly motivated. This is the case across all subjects and year groups, and particularly in history and in computing. The proportion of higher-achieving students attaining the English Baccalaureate is consistently above the national average.
- The school is committed to equality of opportunity and all groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs, make good progress across a wide range of subjects. This is because their specific needs are quickly identified and met with high-quality additional support. The very small number of students who attend courses with other providers make good progress. They learn skills that enable them to go on to further training, education or employment.
- School leaders recognised that gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged students and others were unacceptably wide. As a result of using the pupil premium funding to provide carefully targeted support, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged students is improving across all years. The gaps between their attainment and progress and the attainment and progress of their peers, both in the school and nationally, are now narrowing. In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged students in English was behind that of their classmates by three-quarters of a grade compared to a grade and a half in 2013; they were one grade behind their peers nationally compared to a grade and a half in 2013. In mathematics, the gap narrowed in school and nationally from over two grades in 2013 to around one grade in 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123564
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	462566

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	394
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jim Sparkes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alan Doust
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01588 638257
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