



Inspection report

Ivanhoe College

Unique Reference Number 120251
LEA Leicestershire

Inspection number 269372
Inspection dates 19 - 20 October 2004
Reporting inspector Honoree Gordon HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the school Inspectors Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act.

Type of School	Secondary	School address	North Street,
School category	Community		Ashby-de-la-Zouch,
Age range of pupils	11 - 14		Leicestershire,
			LE65 1HS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 412756
Number on roll	914	Fax number	01530 412146
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Nick Turner
Date of previous inspection	June 1999	Headteacher	Mr A G Hutchinson

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11 - 14	November 2004	269372

Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Ivanhoe College and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ivanhoe College is a community college in north-west Leicestershire. It serves a large market town and the surrounding rural community from which large numbers of its students travel by bus. The College premises are used by over 40 community groups including a Youth Centre and a grant-funded nursery.

The College is oversubscribed. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is less than the national average. There are very few students from ethnic minorities and no refugees, asylum seekers, travellers or students in public care. One student does not speak English as a first language. A small number of students board at the Upper School.

The students start with higher standards than are typical for that age although the whole ability range is covered. The number of students with special educational needs is slightly above average, as is the proportion of students with statements of special education need. Attendance is good and there is a very low level of pupil exclusions.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness of the school

Ivanhoe College is a very effective school which achieves high standards. It continually strives to improve and is never satisfied with second best. The college promotes well the aims stated in its prospectus, and is highly regarded in the community. It has a significant and positive impact on students' lives.

The students are well taught, carefully guided and supported. They make very good progress and achieve high standards in mathematics, English and science at the end of Year 9. Standards are rising faster than the national average and results are improving year on year. The college offers a broad range of subjects and stimulating activities beyond the school day. The care for students is excellent.

The Principal provides very good leadership. He is assisted in this by good support from his governors and leadership team. The Principal sets the tone and leads by example. He assesses the overall effectiveness of the college as good and knows accurately where further improvements could be made. The budget is very prudently managed and accommodation has been improved. The college gives very good value for money.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

The college has made good improvement since the last inspection. Replacement laboratories for science are being built, and facilities and equipment for ICT have been improved with more developments in the pipeline. The students' writing has improved and is now good. The governors take a more strategic role planning and budgeting. Standards have been improved still further and the good quality of teaching maintained. Students' progress is very good and for most it is well-monitored. Homework arrangements are now effective. The school has good arrangements to address the few issues raised at the recent nursery inspection.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

Leadership and management of the college are highly effective at all levels. Good progress has been made in a number of areas which indicate that the college has a high capacity to continue to improve.

Grade: 1

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its strengths and improve standards further, the school should:

- ensure a common approach across departments to checking students' progress
- involve learning support assistants more closely in the planning of work for specific groups of students.

Achievement and standards

Standards are high. By the end of their time at the school, students have made very good progress and reach standards that are above, or well above national averages. When compared to other schools receiving similar students at the age of 11, the results in English, mathematics and science in the national tests at age 14 are very good indeed. The proportion of students achieving the higher levels in these tests is also good. In recent years, achievement in science has been particularly high. Overall, the rate of improvement is better than that seen nationally. Both girls and boys at the college do better than national averages, and in recent years girls have achieved even better than the boys.

In other subjects standards are also high, and the proportions of students achieving higher levels are above national averages. The college analyses test results and addresses issues arising, for example it made it a priority to look at developing students' writing and this has proved very effective as standards of writing are now good.

Students enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. They behave very well in lessons and around school. They are confident, keen to learn and respond enthusiastically to all that the college offers. Students are sensible, and work co-operatively with others. The written work seen in lessons was good and students tackled oral work well, talking with confidence, fluency and enthusiasm. Students make very good progress both academically and in their personal development. The college positively encourages the individuality of each of its students, and this is seen in their growing self esteem and their success.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Ivanhoe college provides a very good education for its students. The college has correctly identified that the teaching is good and enables students to progress well. Through their lessons and the wide range of other activities, students taste success and grow in confidence.

Teachers have high levels of expertise and work effectively in teams. Teaching is challenging and stimulating, encouraging students to think for themselves. Students get on well with their teachers and there is an atmosphere of purposeful work in the classes.

Reading and writing skills are enhanced by the 'literacy across the curriculum' initiative, through which teachers create opportunities for extended writing in subjects other than English. The students are set challenging targets and they know how to improve. Teachers plan work appropriate to the students' abilities. However, some departments do this more effectively than others.

There is a broad, balanced range of subjects, activities and opportunities at the college which meet the needs and interests of learners very well. The school has recently gained the Artsmark. There are some distinctive features, for example in Years 7 and 8 students experience a wide number of different aspects of art, design and technology and can choose according to their interests in Year 9.

The college holds the Sportsmark Award. It is not surprising, therefore, that physical education (P.E.) is a strength with most of Year 9 students taking part in three hours of P.E. per week. In Year 9 also, a second foreign language is offered to the most able linguists. Citizenship education is very well developed.

Students with learning difficulties benefit from working in classes where often the class size is small and from the help provided by learning support assistants, for example with reading. Overall, these students are well taught. They have individual educational plans drawn up, but some teachers could involve the assistants more in preparing the lessons to make sure the work is always appropriate for these students' needs and that their progress can be effectively monitored. The college provides well for students with severe difficulties.

There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities in which many students take part. This adds greatly to their personal development. The college subsidises the cost of individual musical instrument tuition, enabling a significant number to participate.

There are good systems in place to promote spiritual well-being because personal, social and health education (PSHE) is an all-important aspect of school life. The college has organised a very good programme of lessons and other activities which promote these aspects of education as much as the academic subjects. Students learn about other cultures and ethnic diversity through this programme, religious education and college assemblies. All students are treated equally. They say they feel safe at the college and are aware of the policies on bullying and harassment.

There are many opportunities for students to develop self-awareness and positive attitudes to enjoying and achieving in their future lives. Opportunities to promote economic well-being are more limited because of the age of the students, but charitable events and community projects provide good opportunities for students to demonstrate their responsibilities as members of the local and wider community. Students are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle, in a large part through the many opportunities to play sport.

The care and support for students is excellent. Child protection arrangements are robust and there are effective links with outside agencies to ensure that students at risk receive specialist support. The procedures to ensure health and safety are rigorous. Students appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. There is an atmosphere of trust between students and staff, and students know who to confide in when they have problems.

There are good arrangements for supporting students in the transition from primary to high school, and onwards to the upper school. The detailed information provided by primary schools is used effectively to identify students who may require additional help. The school identifies very clearly how to support these students and has effective systems in place, drawing on advice from other agencies as necessary.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of the college are highly effective. The leadership and direction provided by the Principal is very good. He has an open style of management which maintains good staff morale.

The college has successfully focused its efforts on raising standards. The senior management team work well together, leading and managing areas of responsibility. There are clear lines of accountability with subject leaders taking responsibility for lessons in their own area. They observe classes to see how well teachers help students learn. These lesson observations are well-established and contribute significantly to the drive to raise standards. Different departments monitor students' progress in different ways. This can make it difficult for the college managers to get an overall picture of how well individuals or groups of students are actually doing. There is an opportunity here for good practice to be shared across departments, to get a common approach to how to track students' progress.

The college's self-evaluation is honest, evaluative and gives an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Management have good, clear plans to continue to improve the work of the college and they keep a careful eye on this. Subjects have their own plans closely linked to the overall school plan and these are used by senior managers to review how subjects are performing.

Appropriate school policies are in place and equality and diversity issues are addressed effectively. The college could enhance these by looking for additional ways to promote students' understanding of issues related to living in a multi-cultural society.

The governors clearly understand the educational issues facing the college and work closely with the Principal to move these forward. They come into the college to see the work in classes, and work with teachers to help students. They take their statutory responsibilities seriously. Although the

college does not yet fully meet requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship and careers education for all year groups, there are plans to address this.

The college fulfils well its mission as a community college. It has worked hard and successfully to improve provision and facilities: for example, the planning and fundraising for the Astroturf pitch and the swimming pool were led and driven by the Principal. There are very good links with other providers: primary and upper schools; and local sports clubs and societies. The link between the nursery and the college is excellent. This provides a much-used facility for working parents.

Accommodation is adequate overall. The new science block will be completed for September 2005, and additional computing facilities available later this academic year. These will significantly improve the provision. The accommodation is looked after carefully by college staff and students, although the buildings are now getting a little shabby in places. Buildings are kept clean and classrooms are cheerful and bright. The college manages its budget well and it provides very good value for money.

Grade: 1

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