



Inspection report

Claverham Community College

Unique Reference Number 114584
LEA East Sussex

Inspection number 269375
Inspection dates 24 - 25 November 2004
Reporting inspector Bob Roberts HMI

Inspection carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed section 10 under the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	School address	North Trade Road
School category	Community		Battle
Age range of pupils	11 - 16		East Sussex
			TN33 0HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01424 772155
Number on roll	1149	Fax number	01424 774106
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Bowles
Date of previous inspection	May 1999	Headteacher	Mr R Pitts

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11 - 16	December 2004	269375

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 Claverham Community College and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three registered inspectors.

Description of the school

Claverham Community College is a slightly above average-sized, mixed, 11-16 comprehensive school which provides education and extended services to Battle and the surrounding area. The attainment levels of pupils on entry are slightly above average. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with national averages. Comparatively few come from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well below average. A special unit provides for a small number of pupils with hearing impairments. The college has a joint use community sports centre on site and also manages a youth centre, an extensive programme of adult education and a large nursery group. Claverham was designated as a Training School in 2000.

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

The college provides excellent education. Attainment is very high and most pupils make good progress. Pupils enjoy being at the college. Within a strict environment, their behaviour and attendance are very good indeed. The majority take advantage of a wide range of opportunities open to them outside the classroom, and their personal development is very good. They feel secure and valued as individuals. Teaching is consistently good, and some of it is excellent. The well-established house system is at the heart of the college's care and guidance for its pupils. Leadership and management are clear, and weaknesses are addressed. There are high expectations. The college is at the centre of community developments in education and recreation, and is highly regarded. It provides very good value for money.

Grade: 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Since the last inspection standards have improved further. The behaviour, attitudes, attendance and personal development of pupils continue to be very good. Teaching has improved, and the importance of teaching quality has been reinforced by the college's designation as a Training School. Progress on the key issues from the last inspection has been mixed. The implementation of college policies is now well monitored, but progress on curriculum provision is less evident. The college cannot clearly demonstrate that there is coverage of the national curriculum requirements for information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 4 and progress is not evident with regard to the provision for multi-cultural and spiritual development.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The college's self-evaluation is succinct and largely accurate. It identifies some weaknesses, and there is clear evidence of effective action. The senior management continues to be focused on improvement, and there are clear priorities, although these are not evident in the college's planning documents. The climate of the college allows teachers to focus on their job, and there is a commitment within the teaching staff to improve further.

Grade: 2

What the college should do to improve further

- Improve the way subjects are led and managed
- Develop clearer and more widely-shared planning and review processes
- Foster teaching and learning strategies, particularly aimed at developing independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Pupils enter the school with above average standards. They make good progress overall in response to good teaching and provision, so that their standards are much better than expected by the time they leave the school. They make particularly good progress in Years 7 to 9, with rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

In 2003, test and examination results were much better than those of all schools nationally and those of similar schools. Results were even better in 2004, and pupils overall reached the challenging targets set for them in GCSE examinations: three quarters of the year group gained the benchmark of five or more passes at A*-C; almost all pupils achieved the benchmark of five or more passes at A*-G.

Within this overall picture, there are some variations in performance. In recent years, standards in mathematics and science have been particularly high, while those in English have been more variable, although still above national figures. The achievements of girls are consistently better than those of boys, although the gap is narrowing as the school makes improvements in teaching and learning for boys in English. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and those with English as an additional language, achieve very well, and most exceed the targets set for them.

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being

Most pupils conform to the college's strict and, in some respects, rigid discipline. Their behaviour, attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils enjoy their life at college and most of their lessons; they value the calm and well-ordered atmosphere that enables them to benefit from the teaching and the many other opportunities open to them. The college's house system, its deep concern for pupils' safety and welfare, and its high levels of support for pupils experiencing problems are also valued by the pupils. They feel confident that they have someone to turn to when necessary. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. They do not see bullying as an issue within the college, and anti-bullying themes are dealt with well in lessons on personal, social and health education (PSHE).

Pupils are very friendly and their attitudes are positive. They have high levels of respect towards other pupils and to staff; they are tolerant and helpful. Large numbers join in the many activities available to them. Opportunities are particularly strong in sport and the arts. Pupils benefit considerably from these opportunities because it gives some of them the chance to take responsibility for organising and leading activities. Pupils contribute to the college and wider community through the prefect system, where they exercise their authority sensitively, and by serving on the school council. The council has taken a lead in encouraging healthy lifestyles in its review of the college's catering arrangements. Pupils' personal development is also very successfully encouraged through links with local employers: there is an extensive programme to prepare pupils for the world of work; employers play a prominent role in this. All these very positive factors indicate the strength of pupils' moral and social development; their very positive attitudes and tolerance indicate the maturity of their overall personal development. However, the college does not identify in all subjects how spiritual and multi-cultural development will be promoted.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The majority of teaching seen during the inspection was good; some of it was excellent. This matches the college's own judgement of the quality of its teaching. Lesson planning is effective, with work generally well-pitched to pupils' age and abilities. Teachers show good subject knowledge and use teaching methods which ensure that pupils make good progress. The lessons are carefully organised and conducted at a brisk pace.

The best teaching stretches pupils, who show rapid gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. In very good lessons, such as a Year 7 Food Technology lesson on designing and making a healthy salad, pupils work well with each other and develop the skills of independent learning. In the minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, pupils are well-behaved and willing to work, but the teacher does not always make sure that all the pupils are fully involved in learning.

Assessment systems are well-organised and ensure that pupils are clearly informed of their progress. At Key Stage 4, the pupils know what they must do to achieve success in examination courses.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is well-planned, meets statutory requirements and has some distinctive features which give breadth and balance. For example, German and Spanish are offered, as well as French and classics, in Years 7 and 8, with classics leading to Latin in Year 9 for about one quarter of pupils, building a cohort for GCSE Latin in Key Stage 4. Setting by ability is used effectively to meet the individual learning needs of pupils, including the less able.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum covers an appropriate range of subjects and options which allows pupils sufficient choice to meet their needs and aspirations. The curriculum makes good provision for work-related learning through a week of activities in Year 10 involving local employers, followed in Year 11 by work-related provision in tutorial sessions and by a week's work placement for all. The college is also beginning to develop vocational courses, including BTEC and GNVQ.

At both key stages the curriculum makes good provision for the teaching of literacy, numeracy and citizenship. However, secure coverage of the statutory requirements for ICT at Key Stage 4 could not be demonstrated.

The extended services managed by the college enhance the provision for pupils in a number of ways, both within the daytime curriculum and beyond it. Pupils studying childcare, for example, benefit from an on-site nursery. The physical education facilities have been improved for pupils by a climbing wall in the gym financed by a lottery grant, and a sports centre, managed by the school, built by the local district council as part of its community sports provision.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The college has very well-developed provision for care, guidance and support. A very effective system of sharing academic and pastoral information results in good arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupil progress. The system ensures that teachers are very aware of individual pupils' learning needs. The heads of house, and house tutors, play an important role in giving effective support and guidance to help pupils to succeed. The college has a civilised and friendly climate. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Grade: 1

Leadership and management

The principal and deputy principals provide strong leadership, and are very committed to maintaining the high standards and excellent behaviour of the pupils. The school is crisply run and staff apply key whole-school policies consistently. The principal has successfully established an ethos in which the progress of every individual is valued, and he and senior staff work very hard and successfully to ensure that this vision is driven forward throughout the school. The principal and deputy principals are aware of many of the school's strengths and weaknesses: the inspectors found the school's own judgements on the quality of provision to be accurate. The school undertakes a wide range of evidence gathering activities to ensure its self-evaluation is robust and accurate. This includes monitoring lessons, and a detailed analysis of the progress of individual pupils and year groups. This ensures that senior managers are able to correctly identify where teaching could be improved, and where subject leadership and management are not as strong as they can be. Subject leadership and management are outstanding in some areas, for example in mathematics where results are particularly high. There are, however, subjects where the leadership is being closely supported by senior managers, in order to make sure that sufficient improvements to results are taking place.

Though the school is aware of what needs to be done, the formal recording of this is not as good as the knowledge shared through informal meetings. The school improvement plan and departmental plans do not show in detail the outcome expected, or when various phases of important projects should be completed. Furthermore, the areas identified for improvement for the whole school are not all effectively reflected in plans for the different subjects.

The governing body is proud of the school and very supportive. Governors fulfil nearly all statutory requirements, with the exception of collective worship. The school was not able to demonstrate to inspectors that all aspects of the curriculum for ICT in Years 10 and 11 are being met, although governors believe the school meets these requirements. Governors recognise the school's strengths, but are less secure in challenging the school on weaker areas. They receive and approve the school improvement plan, but make no contribution to putting it together.

Financial management is secure and value for money very good. The links the school has built with the wider community have been a very good investment in terms of their impact on pupils' learning. For example, the on-site nursery provides places for teachers' children, and so makes sure that childcare issues do not prevent good staff from staying at the school.

Grade: 2

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