



Hailsham Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 114586
LEA East Sussex

Inspection number 274826
Inspection dates 26-27 April 2005
Reporting inspector N A Pett

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive	College address	Battle Road
School category	Community College		Hailsham
Age range of students	11-18		East Sussex
			BN27 1DT
Gender of students	Mixed	Telephone number	01323 841468
Number on roll	1330	Fax number	01323 48900
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Williams
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Principal	Mrs L Farmer

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11-18	May 2005	274826

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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 Hailsham Community College and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

Description of the college

This is a large 11-18 community college in East Sussex with a smaller than average sixth form. Approximately 5 per cent of the students are from ethnic minority heritage and only a small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are entitled to free school meals is below average, but there are some students from less advantaged backgrounds. A small number of students come from the traveller community, and there is a small number in the care of the local authority. The number of students with special educational needs is high for a college of this size, and the college makes special provision for 22 students with specific learning difficulties. Overall, students span the full range of ability, but by the time they arrive at the college their standards are broadly below average. The college has established specialist status for sport, and more recently for business and enterprise. It is a pilot for full extended services, through which it aims to provide a wide range of education and support services, and it has partnerships with other colleges for extending the curriculum. Staff recruitment in some subjects imposes limitations on the college's performance and overall provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the college

This is a good and improving college. Students make good progress overall in both their academic and personal development. Students' achievement and standards have improved since the last inspection and examination results are now average, with many students doing better than would be expected. The quality of leadership and management is good. The principal and the senior staff share a very clear vision and have the capacity to improve the overall provision even further. Managers and governors have a good understanding of what needs to be done to move the college forward, particularly in sixth form standards, and strategic plans show how this will be done. Improvements have been brought about by successfully raising the quality of teaching and learning through effective monitoring and evaluation. A wide range of developments has enhanced improvement, not least the specialist sport status and, more recently, the Full Extended School Services programme.

The college is well placed to improve its performance to reach the ambitious long-term goals it has set for itself. Parents and students have positive views about their college and are supportive of its progress, even though they recognise there is still more to be done. The college evaluates its work rigorously and accurately. The very high quality of care for all students is reflected in their positive attitudes and regard for their improving college. The very effective links with a range of external bodies to support the education and welfare of students are very well managed. Students feel safe and enjoy their college lives. Parents feel confident that their children are well cared for both academically and personally. Good teaching and the good opportunities in the curriculum make important contributions to the improving pattern of provision. The college provides good value for money.

Grade: 2

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

The sixth form has improved since the last inspection. The college evaluates its provision as being satisfactory but with strengths, especially in the curriculum and care. Inspectors' judgements are that provision is better than that and it is now good. Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is effective in planning and carrying out improvements. The capacity for further improvement is good and is securely based in the effective planning for students across the 14-19 age range. Although standards are below the national average overall, students' progress is at least satisfactory, and improving. Students' personal development and well-being are good, reflecting the quality of provision in the curriculum, care and guidance. Teaching is satisfactory overall. All students are

given opportunities to follow the courses of their choices. The provision is cost-effective.

Grade: 2

What the college should do to improve further

In order to build further on what is already successful, the college should:

- continue to develop the good procedures that it has for assessment by ensuring that they are consistently used across subjects, and especially to support the achievement and progress of potentially higher attaining students;
- continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form to raise students' achievement and standards; and
- teach religious education in the sixth form, and improve the provision for a daily act of collective worship for all students.

Achievement and standards

The college is well aware that students can still do better and the rigorous checking of teaching and learning by senior staff is addressing weaknesses. In some subjects, such as mathematics, performance has suffered because of staffing difficulties. Changes in the curriculum are providing more opportunities for students to succeed at alternative courses and this is reducing the small number of students who leave without GCSE qualifications. The capacity to improve standards even further is very good because the college evaluates its own performance rigorously and accurately, and knows how to bring about improvement where it is needed. Students reach standards which are broadly in line with the national average at the end of both Year 9 and in their GCSEs. Results have improved steadily over recent years and challenging targets are being met.

When students enter the college, their standards are below average overall, although in most years, girls start with higher standards than boys. The college has done well in closing this gap, particularly by the end of Year 9, reflecting the high priority placed on raising boys' attainment. Students make good progress and many do much better than expected. Those with special educational needs mostly make good progress throughout Years 7 to 11. There is no significant difference in the standards reached by the minority of students from other groups represented in the college, although more capable students could do better. The achievement and progress of sixth formers are satisfactory and improving, although standards reached are below average. A good number of them do better than expected given that their attainment is below average on entry. Female students do better than their male counterparts.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

The college promotes students' personal development well. The attitudes and behaviour of students in Years 7 to 11 are good overall and they enjoy their education. Sixth formers show a mature attitude to their studies and to life in the college. Attendance has improved and is now in line with that found in secondary schools nationally. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although the college correctly believes that it can still do more to improve the preparation of students for life in multi-cultural Britain. Not enough is done to celebrate the achievements of people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and thus help to raise expectations and self-esteem, and to broaden the horizons of students who are not themselves of ethnic minority heritage. Sixth formers do not have any formal opportunity to study religious education.

A key factor in students' personal development is the role of the teachers as mentors. Students speak enthusiastically about the way that they can turn to them for advice, guidance and support. House groups study aspects of moral and ethical issues, and the code of conduct is well implemented, reducing the number of exclusions since the last inspection. However, boys are more likely to be excluded than girls. Students appreciate the care and attention given to them by the staff and feel safe and secure at college. The setting and monitoring of targets by staff helps to improve students' academic and personal standards. Sixth formers are encouraged successfully to take responsibilities in the college and help younger students. The House system is well used to promote a sense of belonging, and the various college councils provide good opportunities for the views of learners of all ages to be heard, and for them to take on responsibilities.

The wide range of sporting and related activities, and the emphasis on healthy lifestyles, are of major benefit to students. Out of college activities provide plenty of opportunities for very good social development, through the chance to work in groups and teams and participate in residential trips. The college's organisation and ethos support pupils' well-being outstandingly well, assisted by the very good development of the full extended school services. The specialist status awarded to the school in business and enterprise provides good opportunities to improve the provision for students' economic well-being.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some strong features, which explains why standards are improving. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. This is in part because managers in the school, as inspectors found when they joined them in observing lessons, know how to judge teaching and learning and how to improve them. Inspectors' visits to other lessons and discussions with students further confirmed that teaching is good in Years 7-11 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to support students in their learning and the latter recognise and appreciate this. Occasionally teaching is not well planned enough to meet all the needs, and the college is to some extent constrained by the difficulty it faces in recruiting staff.

The need to improve assessment was an issue raised at the last inspection and there has been good progress. Throughout the college, the use of 'Assessment for Learning' is being established and target setting is improving, although targets are not always clear enough. Discussions with students, and looking at their work, show that some teachers mark very well so that students understand exactly what they have to do to improve, but some teachers do not give enough guidance. Where practice is good, students speak positively about how their self evaluation, which they check against teachers' judgements of them, helps them make progress. Staff are given a very wide range of data on achievement to help in checking students' progress, but whilst some subjects use it well, others do not. This means that where a student is not making sufficient progress the problem is not always spotted as quickly as it should be, particularly for the gifted and talented learners.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The college reviews its curriculum regularly and responds to students' interests and career aspirations well. In Years 7 to 9 students study drama, have a generous allocation of time for citizenship and personal, social and health education and some are trialling an Enterprise learning course. Very good use is made of the community in this work, helping to ensure that students understand how to stay safe and healthy. In Years 10 and 11 the choice of GCSEs and vocational courses is very good, with a range of levels and qualifications on offer. Just under one-fifth of students follow a flexible curriculum combining work or study outside college with subjects in college. The sixth form curriculum is also developing with an increasing choice of academic and vocational options courses, which reflect the good partnerships

with the federation of other colleges. The statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and religious education teaching in the sixth form are not met. Students appreciate the very good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport and, where relevant, take advantage of the extended services available from the many external agencies that work with the college.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The college has a good focus on students' well being, with some outstanding aspects. This provision is making a major contributor to students' overall good personal development and progress. There is very good liaison with community, primary, secondary and further education establishments, and students of all ages receive good support and guidance. These approaches support students well in induction and decision-making at the crucial stages of their education. The college nurtures all students very well, for example those who attend the learning support unit, those in public care, or who are at risk of exclusion. The college has increased the number of services for young people which are based on site, for example counselling and social services, reflecting the developing aspects as a full extended school services programme. Child Protection procedures and practice are outstanding, and health and safety is effectively managed. Students receive good advice and guidance about courses and careers, which is well augmented through the strong mentoring programme. Students emphasise that this provision, and the way that staff and other adults act, makes them feel safe.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The principal provides very good leadership, which makes this an effective and improving college. The overall management is good, being well supported by the senior management team, who share the overall vision and are rigorous in their work. Governance is good and the governors have a good understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. This has ensured that the quality and pace of improvement has been good, leading to students' higher standards and achievement, especially in Years 7 to 11. The college improvement plan is strategic, and reflects the good quality of self-evaluation. Through a separate sixth form strategic plan, the need to further improve standards and provision for older students is well acknowledged. Leaders know that girls outperform boys and they have put measures in place to improve boys' performance, which are proving to be successful. The head of sixth form works closely with the principal and senior managers in ensuring improvements made recently are sustained and continued. The college makes good use of other schools and

colleges to supplement provision for its students. Inspectors' judgements are in line with those in the self-evaluation and agree with the school's self-evaluation that there is good capacity for further improvement.

There are good systems for listening to the ideas of students, students, parents and others with an interest in the school, and the questionnaires show that broadly positive views are held. Links with many external agencies support learners very well, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Resources are very well managed. Finances are managed well and efficiency is helped by the constructive way the college compares its performance with other institutions. It is providing good value for money. Performance management, and the overall monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, are very effective. The recruitment and selection of staff has produced some difficulties, undermining the overall quality of teaching and learning, but college managers and governors have been very concerned to only appoint suitable teachers and support staff. Overall, the leadership and management is set on ensuring that the college's overall provision meets the academic and personal development needs of its students.

Grade: 2

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	*2	*2
How well does the college work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	2
The effectiveness of the college's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	*2	3
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	3	4
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	*2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	*2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	*2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	*2	2
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	*2	2

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	*2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which college enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
The extent to which college enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Yes

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Hailsham Community College
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28th April 2005

Dear Students

This letter is to tell you about the recent inspection of your college. I would like to thank you for the courteous manner in which you behaved towards me and the other inspectors. What you had to tell us was very valuable and helped us in our work. Inspectors have reached judgements about the quality of education you enjoy at the college and would like you to know what these are. The following things are done well:

- your college is well led and managed, which has brought about improvements;
- most of you behave well and try your best to do well;
- the examination results are improving and, as many of you said, you are taught well;
- the college provides very well for your personal development;
- the specialist status for sport is very well used and supported; and
- the college is working hard to give you access to opportunities which will help you to learn, for example, through extending its specialist status into business and enterprise.

We have said that your college needs to improve some of its work, which we believe will help you to get better examination results. The main things that it has to do are:

- to improve the way that your work is marked and that the targets you are set help you, and really show you how you can improve;
- to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the sixth form so that older students' do even better;
- to provide religious education in the sixth form; and
- to provide more opportunities for you to have an act of collect worship daily.

Overall, we feel that you are attending a good college and we hope that you will continue to contribute all that you can for your own personal benefit, and for the benefit of all those who work with you.

With very best wishes for your future education

Yours sincerely

Nigel Pett - Lead Inspector