



# City of Ely Community College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110883  
**LEA** CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278545  
**Inspection dates** 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Stephen Grounds LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Downham Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		CB6 2SH
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01353667763
<b>Number on roll</b>	1239	<b>Fax number</b>	01353669548
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. Bill Harrison
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Ian Gartshore

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 278545
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## **Introduction**

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

## **Description of the school**

The City of Ely Community College is a large mixed comprehensive school for 1239 pupils aged 11-19. Around 95% are from white British backgrounds and there are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The college serves a large heterogeneous area some of which has recognised social and economic deprivation. However, within the catchment area there is considerable growth due to new housing. The college has been designated a specialist business and enterprise college since 2003. At the start of year 12 pupils may attend the college's sixth form but they also have access to other sixth form provision in the Cambridge area through the arrangements of the Cambridge Collegiate Board of which the college is part.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors share the view of the college that at present its provision is overall satisfactory. It is, nevertheless, an improving school and it provides satisfactory value for money. The progress that pupils and students make is satisfactory. Teaching is generally sound and some is good. The college looks after its pupils and students well. They are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. They feel safe in the college and enjoy their time in it. The specialist status in business and enterprise has contributed to the development of all the college's pupils and this aspect successfully promotes their economic awareness. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils in the mainstream part of the school well. A satisfactory curriculum is provided in the sixth form. There has been improvement in most of the aspects identified as in need of action in the last report. For example, the college has substantially improved its facilities in information and communications technology (ICT). The college is soundly led and managed with strengths in the direction given by the principal and the senior management team. The monitoring of performance is thorough and systematic and has led to clear improvement in some subjects. The college demonstrates a capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The standards achieved have improved, particularly in vocational courses. Although overall standards are below average, the progress of students is good given the broad spectrum of ability. Retention rates through successive years are high; students enjoy their experience at the college and are motivated to succeed. The ICT suite, vocational courses and learning resource centre provide good opportunities for independent learning. Students are well-supported by subject staff and they are given good guidance as to how to improve their work. Whilst form tutors provide effective individual support for students they are insufficiently involved in determining an overview of their students' achievement, for example, through the 'progress review'. In classes the quality of teaching is good. It effectively promotes the learning and achievement of students. The management of the sixth form is good. There are robust systems in place to monitor teaching and to track the progress of students. Leadership is satisfactory. Staff are working towards creating a shared vision of the objectives of the sixth form and promoting a wider involvement between the college and local community. There is a good understanding of the strengths of the sixth form and what is needed to bring about further improvement.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue the focus on improving the achievement of boys, in particular lower attainers. - Develop further, the role of heads of department in monitoring and improving the teaching of their subjects. - Improve the use of assessment to guide pupils' and students' learning across the college.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Overall standards in national examinations and tests at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 are close to the national average. They have risen in recent years as a result of the college's closer monitoring of pupils' progress and improved strategies for identifying and supporting those at risk of underachieving. Pupils' starting points in Year 7 are typically average or a little below. They make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science and the college met its 2005 targets in Year 9 national tests. The results were an improvement in all these subjects compared to the previous year, even though the cohort of pupils was of similar ability. Throughout the college, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their targets. Results in national examinations at the end of Year 11 have in past years been considerably below the national average, reflecting some underachievement, but they have been improving steadily since 2003. The latest results for 2005 show a considerable rise in standards. The proportion achieving five or more good GCSE passes was in line with the national average, the college met its challenging target, and English standards in particular improved compared to the previous year. Taking account of pupils' standards when in Year 9, they achieved satisfactorily, both in 2004 and in 2005. However, the proportion of pupils achieving at least five good GCSEs that include English and mathematics is not high enough. Mathematics has not improved as much as English and the subject did not meet the college's specialist college target. Girls tend to do better than boys by Year 11. In particular, lower attaining boys are not achieving as well as they should, a weakness of which the college is aware and is taking steps to address.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with some good features in moral and social development. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and they have a strong steer from the staff through the tutoring and behaviour management strategies in place. Most pupils enjoy their education and have positive attitudes towards their work. During the inspection, in lessons observed and around the college, pupils were well behaved. There is nevertheless a small minority of pupils who are disrespectful to adults. Attendance is just below the national average. The majority adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles. The school 'cabinet' has successfully encouraged the college to improve its lunchtime provision of healthy meals. Pupils and students make a positive contribution to the community through the provision of concerts and by supporting charitable organisations such as the Macmillan charity for cancer relief. Pupils also help to support other pupils from a nearby special school. Pupils make good overall progress in developing their personal qualities that will enable them to contribute more effectively to the community and to a future life at work. This is a strength of the college.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Inspectors broadly agreed with the college that teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is evident also from the sound progress made by pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and almost all subject teachers are specialists. Planning is sound, as is the management of behaviour. The more effective teaching has a number of clear features. In the best lessons teachers use expert questioning techniques to prompt lively discussion. They assess pupils' progress effectively, providing a variety of interesting tasks suited to the needs and capabilities of all pupils. Relationships with pupils are very good, and this creates a good learning atmosphere. In one outstanding English lesson, the teacher employed her subject expertise, good humour and guidance to inspire a class of average Year 10 pupils to produce very good presentations and make excellent progress. In the less successful lessons, teachers do not use classroom assessment effectively and varied provision for different pupils is not strongly evident. Pupils have fewer opportunities to develop independent learning skills and to be active in their learning. However, the college has initiated a range of cross-subject measures to improve the quality of teaching, which have already had a beneficial effect on standards.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum of the main part of the college is good. It offers a wide range of courses which meet the needs of all of its pupils well. All the weaknesses indicated in the last inspection report, notably in ICT and religious education, have been remedied. In keeping with the college's specialist status, there is a strong emphasis in business and enterprise, in all years. The curriculum is well complemented by an extensive range of enrichment activities. Pupils participate well in sport. The Key Stage 3 curriculum covers the full requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils also follow courses in religious education and drama. They can study two modern foreign languages and, where appropriate, sit the GCSE examination in a language early, in Year 9. The wide range of vocational courses, including ICT, is a strength of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. These courses prepare pupils well for the demands of the world of work. The one-week work placement in Year 10 gives pupils helpful first-hand experience. All pupils study technology. In conjunction with the local college of further education, the college provides an alternative programme. This effectively motivates a group of pupils, for whom the regular curriculum is not suited. The sixth form curriculum has some good features such as the range of vocational courses which are offered. However, the recently introduced 'enrichment programme' has insufficient variety and is not open to all students. A range of opportunities provided by business and other partners in

the community has a positive impact on the personal development of students and helps prepare them for working life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care and guidance provided for pupils is good. The college has robust systems, for example, child protection, health and safety and staff vetting procedures, for ensuring pupils' safety, health and welfare. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure at college. While some bullying and harassment does occur, pupils express confidence in the college's systems for dealing effectively with it. Pupils' behaviour has improved as a result of more consistent application of the college's behaviour policy and a closer partnership with parents. The college's programme of personal, social and health education includes regular themed conferences throughout the year in which good use is made of outside agencies to help pupils become safety conscious and to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils are also guided well in their choice of courses and career options, particularly in Years 9 and 11. All pupils are given challenging targets to work towards and these are shared with parents. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and discussed with them. The college's sharp focus on supporting those pupils at risk of not achieving good GCSE passes in Years 10 and 11 and the actions taken to mentor them is a key reason for improved results in 2005. However, in other year groups where potential underachievement is identified, the actions taken are not yet consistent across the college and this is an area the college is currently working to improve. There is a good partnership with several external services and with parents to assess the needs and make effective provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. They are supported effectively in lessons and, in Years 10 and 11 in particular, individual curriculum programmes are provided that match their needs well.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The principal and the senior management team provide good leadership and management but there is some variability in the way this is carried forward by middle managers. The leadership team provides a clear and sharp focus on college improvement based upon a careful and detailed analysis of pupil attainment and progress. Regular reviews are undertaken with departments based upon this data and lesson observations. The views of parents are sought. Appropriate action plans are produced. However, the quality of improvement effected by heads of department varies. Equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination is tackled to enable learners to achieve as well as they can, a point which is appreciated particularly by parents with children with special educational needs. The teaching staff is appropriately qualified and vetting procedures for all adults working with pupils are robust. The college's resource base has been improved since the last inspection as has its physical internal appearance. Pleasant accommodation is provided for the sixth form although this will come under pressure as numbers increase. The college makes good links with other providers and with local businesses, in part as a result of its business and enterprise status. The governing body

understands its role well; it criticises and challenges the college management appropriately. Financial management in the college is sound. The college's self evaluation is good. It knows its strengths and shortcomings and is well placed to continue to improve.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school'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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
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	3	
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	insufficient evidence

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

It was very good to meet many of you during the inspection and to listen to the many positive things you had to say about the college. Thank you for your participation in the work of the inspection team. We judged that the college is providing you with a sound education and is a school which is steadily improving. The principal and the senior staff of the school know what it does well, and why, and know what they need to do to make it even better in the future.

Pupils and students in the main school make sound progress taking into account their starting points. We note that girls do better than boys and that this summer there was a considerable rise in standards. We think that the range of subjects offered to you is good. We were impressed by the orderly and tranquil environment for learning as we went about the college. We know that a small minority of pupils sometimes annoyingly behave badly but we feel that this is well handled by the school. It was evident that most pupils enjoy their time in the college. The teaching varies in quality across the subjects. There is much good teaching in the school and especially in the sixth form. We were impressed by what the college tries to do for you outside lessons, for example, what it does in trying to help you adopt healthy lifestyles and what it does to guide you into the wider world of work. We consider the mentoring programme in year 11 is very effective in helping you do well as you approach public examinations. We know the college is extending this good system to other years. We consider that at a senior level the college is well managed with a track record of steady improvement. As such it has a good capacity to improve further. We have said to the college that in order to improve it needs to:

- Continue to focus on improving the achievement of boys.
- Support heads of subjects in the way they lead their subject teams.
- Improve the way in which the results of tests and pupil monitoring is used to identify what individual pupils need to do to get better in what they do.

The inspection team wish you well with your studies and your future lives.