



# Queen Elizabeth's Community College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113498  
**LEA** Devon  
**Inspection number** 279181  
**Inspection dates** 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Faysal Mikdadi RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Western Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Crediton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 18		Devon EX17 3LU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01363 773 401
<b>Number on roll</b>	1545	<b>Fax number</b>	01363 777 859
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Mary Quick
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 October 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Richard Newton Chance

<b>Age group</b> 11 to 18	<b>Inspection dates</b> 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 279181
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Queen Elizabeth's Community Technology College is a large comprehensive in Crediton, west of Exeter. Most students are bussed in from a wide area. The Specific Learning Difficulties Centre has twenty-five students with dyslexia. The College also has a boarding house with forty students. Some are visiting Hong Kong Chinese and German students. The college, which has gained a Technology Specialist Status, is part of a wider learning community that includes thirteen primary schools. It is also a teacher training institution. There are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall effectiveness of the college is good. The principal and his senior colleagues know the strengths and weaknesses of the college and what they need to do to improve provision further. The college is accurate in its own evaluation of the quality of provision and its effectiveness. Innovative assessment strategies have recently been introduced, but there has not been enough checking by managers to ensure that all teachers apply the agreed assessment strategies consistently.

Students make good progress. Standards reached in the lower and the upper school are average whereas they are above average in the sixth form. The improvements in standards in 2005 happened because the college identified areas of weakness and successfully supported those departments that needed it. The teaching is good and students respond and achieve well. Occasionally, some students engage in low-level chatter during lessons and teachers do not consistently challenge them.

Queen Elizabeth's is a safe, happy and healthy community that cares well for each student. Behaviour around the school is good, and in the classroom it is satisfactory. The curriculum provides a good range of activities which meets the interests of students as well as meeting their needs. The college does outstanding work in partnership with others to promote the students' well-being. The college makes every effort to overcome the inconveniences caused by the split site as well as the poor quality of some buildings. Provision in the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre is good and the students make good progress. The boarding facilities are outstanding and students feel happy, well cared for and safe. Improvements since the last inspection have been good and the college has good capacity to make further improvements. It gives good value for money.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The college accurately judges effectiveness, standards and achievement as good. Students are good at expressing themselves and learning independently. The mentoring system is outstanding. Students know where to go for help. They enjoy being at the college, and feel they have excellent guidance. Teaching is good. The centre makes good provision for students with dyslexia. Each student has an individualised learning plan, which ensures that progress is regularly monitored to make certain that the challenging targets they are set are being reached. Students speak well of the provision and they appear happy and safe. Support in lessons is effective although not every teacher knows the full extent of each student's special need. Students are looked after well within a context of excellent relationships. The result is that students make good progress, which enhances their self-esteem. They are also taught to work independently to prepare them for life beyond the college. The sixth form is well led and managed. Students' work is closely monitored, and help is given when needed to enable them to reach the grades they are capable of. The sixth form works very closely with other colleges and businesses, which enhances students' understanding of the world of work.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The last inspection by the Commission for Social Care recognised that, with two minor exceptions, all of the National Minimal Standards met, and many exceeded, the required level. The two exceptions have been dealt with satisfactorily. Care staff work closely with teachers. Excellent procedures at the beginning and end of each day provide staff with information about their students, either difficulties or successes. Boarding provision is very well organised, efficiently managed and adequately staffed. Accommodation is well maintained, comfortable and welcoming. Students report that they feel safe and happy. Students are successfully encouraged to develop their independence skills. A good range of activities is available in the evening, with young people from the neighbourhood joining in these activities. The students are also encouraged to attend appropriate local groups and use the town's facilities.

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

- Take firmer action to ensure that teachers always use the agreed assessment practices so that the college policy on assessment is used consistently in all subject areas.
- Ensure that all staff apply the college's personal mentoring policy in order to improve achievement further.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 2**

Students' attainment when they join the college is average. By the end of Year 9, standards are above average, with students making good progress. In 2005, standards improved, especially for the more able students. By the time that students have completed Year 11, standards are above average. In a few subjects, GCSE results in 2005 were also above average, with marked improvements made in French and German. The college has recognised that girls do better than boys and has taken action which has improved boys' standards steadily over the last three years. Students in the sixth form make consistently good progress. Their examination results have been steadily improving year on year because of the outstanding care and support that they receive.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are most vulnerable make equally good progress as a result of the effective support and guidance that they receive. The result is that students in the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre do well in their GCSE examinations.

The students make good progress in all years mainly because the college has a very strong focus on ensuring that every student is well supported. The result is that each student feels that he or she is treated as a valued individual. The current work that the college has begun on improving assessment and mentoring strategies has enhanced students' learning, although its implementation is not consistent across all subjects and teachers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Students work well together in class and in other activities. Students from all year groups are on the school council, which is led by the sixth form, and they work hard to bring about changes for their friends. Sixth formers, who have had professional training, are successfully involved in assisting with a programme of sex education for younger students. Cultural development is strongly reflected in the activities involving music, drama and the Amnesty and Fair Trade groups in the sixth form.

Despite the difficulties of the split site and some poor accommodation, behaviour around the college is generally good and students conduct themselves safely. In a small minority of lessons, behaviour is only satisfactory as low-level chatter inhibits learning. Behaviour in the sixth form is good.

Students enjoy college life. Attendance has improved over the last three years and is satisfactory. Exclusion levels are low and, as a result of very good re-integration strategies, only very few students are ever excluded more than once.

Students make an excellent contribution to the community through peer mentoring, school council activities, and engaging in extra-curricular activities, including team games, charity work, youth club activities and public performances. Sixth form students lead some of these activities expertly. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They make use of the drinking water made available to them, large numbers participate in the extra-curricular sports offered and the college makes particular efforts to teach students about healthy eating. The college gives students good opportunities to enhance their understanding of economic well-being through work experience for the older students, aspects of personal, social and health education, citizenship and careers work and the opportunities given to all students to manage their own affairs independently. Students respond well to these opportunities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good throughout the college because the level of challenge in lessons ensures that students make good progress. Lessons are well planned and taught by teachers who know their subjects well. The good relationships between teachers and students aid learning. Many lessons use ICT to help students learn, and a range of good resources, taking full advantage of the college's technology status, is used to promote different ways of learning. Some students understand their targets and know how to improve, but this is inconsistent across the college; not all teachers use and apply existing data effectively and rigorously.

Students with specific learning difficulties are supported well in lessons, in many cases by a learning assistant, and they make good progress with this support. Gifted and

talented students are challenged through additional demands made on them. Students work well together, respecting others' opinions, and the results of the student satisfaction surveys show that they enjoy their learning. Excellent libraries on both sites offer additional learning opportunities for students, who use them well.

Teachers are able to take advantage of the college's designation as a training school, and learn from each other. The well-established monitoring system works well in identifying issues to be addressed. Some students would make better progress and achieve higher standards if the college's strategies, especially in assessment, were applied more consistently. The college with its partners is successfully creating a learning community in Crediton and the surrounding area which involves all learners and is based on the successful practice that exists at the college.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum across the college is good. In the early years, a full range of national curriculum subjects and religious education is offered. Physical education is taught for two hours a week to emphasise the priority given to healthy living. Literacy and numeracy strategies are applied effectively across all subjects. Older students receive a wide curriculum. Some of the options are provided by local colleges, linking well to preparation for the world of work and consequently widening students' choices. All students are successfully offered work experience in Year 10, which enhances their understanding of economic well-being and the world of work. Personal, social and health education, citizenship and the enrichment programme have a positive effect on the students' personal development.

In the sixth form, a comprehensive range of courses is available at different levels, with a particularly successful extension through a well planned and implemented enrichment programme. Key skills, including study skills, complement these courses well, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities enhances the learning experiences of all students.

Extra-curricular activities include a wide range of leisure, sports and social activities, which are available at lunchtime and at the end of the college day. This adds to the quality of students' learning experiences, as does the residential experience in Year 8.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, guidance and support are good. Students know how well they are doing through monitoring letters that are sent home. They get advice on how to improve, although practice is inconsistent. Good practice exists in geography and English, where students assess each other's work. Students have a mentor who discusses their progress and well-being with them and agrees learning targets. This is a new strategy and while it is already showing some benefits, the quality of mentoring sessions varies considerably.

Parents value regular meetings with staff and believe that their children are safe and well cared for. Staff have excellent links with outside agencies. These provide good information about students' circumstances and needs.

Arrangements for supporting vulnerable students and for their re-integration after a period of exclusion are also excellent. Child protection procedures are fully in place and well understood. Students know where to turn if they have problems and a counsellor is available on both sites. Very little bullying occurs, but when it does, it is well handled, so students feel safe. Students in Year 7 feel very well supported in moving from their primary school and enjoy their new school. Students appreciate letters home praising them. They understand the reasons for any sanctions and accept them. Guidance and support in the sixth form is outstanding. Students have exceptional relationships with their mentors and receive detailed guidance on their next steps. The end-of-sixth form diploma provides an excellent record of students' sixth form career.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The leadership and management of the college are good. At all levels, leaders and managers are well co-ordinated. They concentrate their efforts effectively on raising standards and achievement, as well as the personal development of all groups of students, both in the main college and in the sixth form.

The college makes exceptional efforts to ensure that students work in an atmosphere that is happy and safe. New policies on behaviour and attendance are bearing fruit. The college promotes equality of opportunity. When reviews indicate that students may be underachieving, the leadership team is quick to respond. They identify likely causes and provide direction and guidance so that shortcomings are effectively addressed. However, systems for monitoring the use of time during tutor periods are not as effective and, as a result, practice varies considerably.

Subject leaders work effectively to bring about improvements in test, assessment and examination results and the quality of teaching within their teams. They do not all follow the college's procedures in the same way but differences in practice are decreasing. More and more, individual teachers evaluate their own effectiveness using common practices. In addition to the checking by subject leaders, all teachers have a partner with whom they share good practice through observing each other. In some cases, the benefits of this arrangement have spread widely, to good effect.

Governors play an active part in policy making and strategic planning. They know the college's strengths and weaknesses well and, with the principal, set a clear direction for all aspects of the college's work. The college is not meeting the statutory requirement for a daily act of worship. The college recognises that it spends more money per individual sixth form student than it does on each main school student. It has plans in place to equalise expenditure more evenly. Over recent years, the principal, the governing body and the senior leadership team have shown a good capacity to lead and manage continuing improvements.



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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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
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>	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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	1	
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>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	1

<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>	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	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
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	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**

Queen Elizabeth's Community Technology College Western Road Crediton Devon EX17 3LU

4 November 2005

Dear Students

I am writing to tell you about our recent visit to your college. I would very much like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome and for being so helpful to us in answering so many questions.

You spoke highly of your college. We understand why you did so. Yours is a good college. It is run by a good group of leaders who know exactly what the college does well and what else to do in order to improve things even more. As a result of this, as well as the good teaching you receive, you make consistently good progress. This good progress leads you to achieve above-average results in the Year 9 tests, slightly better results in the GCSE, with many of you doing very well in some subjects and achieving above-average results by the end of your sixth form. The college is outstanding in the way that it ensures that each and every one of you is included in all aspects of its life. The result is that you are well looked after, cared for and guided. In the sixth form, care and guidance are outstanding. Those of you who board in the college also have outstanding provision.

The Specific Learning Difficulties Centre does a good job of supporting the language needs of those of you who have dyslexia. One result of this support has been a high rate of success in the GCSE examinations over the last few years.

So many of you are involved in the life of the college and in the local community. The work that you do in this area is outstanding.

Not all of you pay sufficient attention in every lesson and you can make better progress if you all concentrate a little harder on your work. We also suggest in our report to the college that assessment and personal mentoring should be more consistent across the whole college in order to make sure that every student benefits fully so that progress becomes even better than it is now.

Once again, I want to thank you all for your hospitality. We enjoyed visiting your college and we wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. F. H. Mikdadi - Lead Inspector