



Holsworthy Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113511
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279183
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Keith Simmonds RISP

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Victoria Hill
School category	Community		Holsworthy
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Devon EX22 6JD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01409 253430
Number on roll	697	Fax number	01409 253121
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roger Young
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Fitzsimmons

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005	Inspection number 279183
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Holsworthy Community College serves a rurally isolated area of north west Devon. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties. The percentage of pupils who have a statement for their learning difficulties is broadly in line with the national average. Holsworthy Community College has gained the Sportsmark silver award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Holsworthy Community College is a satisfactory school that has some good features. Its own judgement of its overall effectiveness as satisfactory provides an accurate view of its work and progress. The headteacher is providing a good lead and with key staff, governors and parents is helping the college to challenge its existing practices and move forward in a determined way. The college provides good value for money.

The standards throughout the school and the pupils' progress are satisfactory. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more grades A*-C in GCSE examinations has improved since the last inspection and is above the national average. However, there is an underlying weakness in many pupils' key skills, particularly in literacy, but also to a lesser extent in numeracy. The standards achieved in English are too low.

Pupils' personal development and well-being and the quality of care, guidance and support provided for them are satisfactory and have some good features. Pupils' usually work hard in lessons and their behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory and most pupils say they enjoy coming to school. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and there are some elements of effective practice. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides all pupils with a range of courses, to meet most of their needs. The quality of leadership and management in the college is satisfactory overall, although the quality of middle management is inconsistent. The college has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in improving standards, aspects of its provision, and leadership and management, and has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- continue its focus on implementing assessment for learning and increase the effectiveness of assessment in all subjects
- raise standards in English throughout the college
- ensure that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are more effectively taught in all subjects
- improve the leadership of some middle managers in its focus on raising standards and pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in the college are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils join the college with broadly average results in the national tests for 11 year olds. Standards at the end of Year 9 are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. There are no differences between the performance of different groups of pupils or boys and girls. The national tests results in 2004 show that standards in English and mathematics were above the national average and in science were well above the national average. Progress from the pupils' prior attainment in Year 6 was stronger in mathematics and science but in English was weaker and too low. Provisional results for 2005 show a slight improvement in mathematics but a decline in English.

By the end of Year 11, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards that are in line with national expectations. In 2004, the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C was above the national average. This indicates satisfactory achievement. The trend of results for pupils who achieved five or more GCSE grades A*-C has been above the national average since 2001. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher A* and A grades in science and art was above those nationally but the proportion gaining these grades in mathematics and English literature was below average. Results for grades A*-C were above average in art and design, double award science, design and technology, geography, German, music and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieved standards in line with their personal targets. Provisional GCSE results in 2005 for those achieving five or more grades A*-C are lower than those in the previous year but are in line with pupils' targets based on their prior attainment and the college's agreed target.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy their time at the college. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are satisfactory. Although the college does not fully meet the statutory requirements for collective worship, the regular year assemblies provide opportunity for reflection and deeper thinking on moral issues. Spiritual development is satisfactory overall and well fostered in subjects such as art and design and English. Pupils' awareness of moral and social issues is good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and many have good levels of confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility and, through the new college and year councils, contribute well to the college's decision-making process. The social skills displayed at lunchtime are particularly good. The pupils' cultural awareness and development are satisfactorily addressed through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and friendly to visitors. Attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory and most pupils engage readily in their work.

Most pupils feel safe in the school and enjoy positive relationships with their peers and with adults. A minority report that there are incidences of bullying, which are dealt with effectively, although they can persist for too long. Pupils take advantage of the opportunities to adopt a healthy lifestyle, regularly participating in sporting activities and increasingly eating the healthy option in the school canteen. Links with the community are good allowing many pupils to make a positive contribution. Overall, pupils are developing satisfactory personal qualities to enable them to contribute to the community and their future economic well-being, but the weaknesses in their literacy skills can hinder development for some.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This judgement confirms the college's own evaluation. Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils develop positive relationships with their teachers. The college's recent training in managing pupils' behaviour more effectively has been successful in raising the quality of some teaching and learning. Effective monitoring by senior leaders is used to identify areas for improvement, as with the college's own identification of assessment for learning. The system of peer coaching is valued by staff and seen as successful in improving the quality of practice.

In the more effective lessons, pupils were enthused by their learning so that they made good progress. The pace of these lessons was brisk and purposeful. The teachers' detailed knowledge of the pupils' strengths, weaknesses and prior learning informed the activities and questioning. The tasks set were challenging and encouraged the pupils to be independent to evaluate their own achievements. However, where the quality of teaching and learning is only satisfactory, pupils are less engaged and too passive in their work. Tasks lack challenge and do not sufficiently stretch the higher attaining pupils. At times, lower attaining pupils are supported too much in their learning. They are given too many worksheets as tasks that do not provide them with sufficient challenge. Teaching assistants are effective and give good support to individual pupils.

The college has made some progress in improving assessment, an issue identified in the last report. However, it has been more successful in the process of target setting, than in using assessment effectively to support learning on a continuous basis. There are examples of good practice but overall it is patchy across subjects. Much remains to be done to make assessment an integral part of all teaching and learning. The college has rightly recognised assessment for learning as a current priority for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum gives pupils an appropriate range of learning opportunities at all stages. It has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The provision is broad and balanced throughout the college.

The reorganisation of the curriculum has helped to improve standards in Years 7 to 9 with improved arrangements for the teaching of the core subjects. In Years 10 and 11, pupils choose from a good range of academic and vocational courses. The availability of vocational courses and the establishment of the Skills Centre, in partnership with the local college of further education, mean that the college provides well for pupils with diverse needs and interests. As a result, more pupils are being entered for appropriate courses and gaining qualifications than at the time of the last inspection. Weaknesses in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are not consistently addressed

across the curriculum and this has an impact on the standards pupils reach. Although all pupils experience two weeks' work experience, there is not a discrete programme of enterprise education in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory. Many benefit from courses in key skills leading to an ASDAN qualification in personal effectiveness at the end of Year 11. Gifted and talented pupils are well identified and good practice is evident in mathematics for Years 8 and 10 and in physical education, but overall the specific provision for these pupils is not consistent. There are good opportunities for enrichment activities during and after school and pupils especially appreciate the range of sports, music and drama activities. Revision and coursework clubs are well used to support pupils' progress. Foreign visits and exchanges, fieldwork and theatre visits, including residential opportunities, are effectively used to raise standards in specific subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The college evaluated this area of its work as good. The evidence shows that it is satisfactory because there are some inconsistencies in the overall quality of academic guidance and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Most pupils feel safe and well supported. Staff supervise the school well, have a high profile at key times of the day and are readily available to provide support. Pupils in Year 7 highly praised the way in which the college has helped them to settle in, and feel comfortable and secure.

Procedures for child protection are reviewed regularly, followed accurately and meet statutory requirements. Absence and lateness are followed up promptly and effectively, and poor behaviour is quickly addressed.

Pupils receive good personal support from their year leaders and tutors, which is backed up by a well organised teaching programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship.

There are some inconsistencies in the academic guidance and support given to pupils. The college does not sufficiently explore and evaluate emerging patterns across all of its data to improve pupils' progress. Although some good practice exists, it is not yet routine or consistent. The provision for pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties and in public care is satisfactory. They are well supported by teaching assistants and their progress is satisfactory. However, the risk assessments for those pupils with the most challenging behaviour and severe difficulties are not sufficiently specific. For those with moderate learning difficulties, although there is good practice, the provision across subjects is inconsistent.

Pupils receive good information, advice and guidance at appropriate times in relation to courses and their future career progression. The links with a range of local agencies are effective in promoting pupils' health, safety and welfare. Pupils make a positive contribution through arrangement of effective community links.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher's leadership is good. With the recently expanded senior leadership team, he provides the college with a clear vision and has had a positive impact upon the quality of provision. In particular, the development of the vocational skills centre has significantly improved the curriculum for many pupils. The quality of monitoring and evaluation by most of the senior team is considerably improved. There is a growing culture in which subjects and teachers expect their work to be monitored and see value in this process.

The views of pupils are sought as part of the college's self-evaluation and they feature appropriately in reports and actions, as with development of the curriculum and assessment. Procedures managing staff are secure across the school. The senior team has worked hard to recruit suitable staff in challenging circumstances. In most cases, they have been successful in appointing staff who have improved the overall quality of subject leadership and teaching and learning. The work of the governing body is satisfactory and provides the college with appropriate support and cautious challenge. The quality of middle management, although good in some areas, is not so consistent or secure.

The drive to improve literacy skills and assessment, particularly in enhancing their effect upon learning and achievement, has not had sufficient impact. The useful data and information collected across many areas of the college's work is not always evaluated by the middle managers, or used rigorously enough to improve pupils' progress. The planned restructuring of the leadership and management of subjects offers the capacity for improvement. The college has made reasonable progress in improving provision since the last inspection report and so has demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve further.

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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>	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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Holsworthy Community College Victoria Hill Holsworthy Devon EX22 6JD

17 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your college on the 16–17 November. Your views were very important to us when we were making our judgements. Inspectors found your college to be a satisfactory school with some good features.

- you achieve really well in some subjects and make at least satisfactory progress
- weaknesses in English and your basic skills in reading, writing and spelling can hinder you doing even better
- you are not always clear about what you have learnt and what it is you need to do better in your work
- you have a much better choice of subjects and courses, particularly in Years 10 and 11, than at the last inspection
- some good teaching helps you make the most progress but sometimes you are not as actively involved, and your work is too easy
- most of you enjoy your time at college and attend regularly
- you like the many opportunities to take part in activities outside lessons
- you are encouraged to live healthily and develop well as people
- you feel safe in college, behave well and support each other.

There are many ways in which you can help your college improve and so make sure that you get a really good education.

- you need to make sure you actively involve yourselves in your lessons
- make sure you know what you can do and what it is you must learn to improve further
- you need to practise your skills of reading, writing and spelling more in all of your subjects and use your mathematical skills more.

Inspectors thought that all the people who lead and manage the college can work together to build on its strengths. Be proud of the many satisfactory and good features of Holsworthy Community College and work with your teachers to make it an even better school. Thank you for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully

Keith Simmonds Lead Inspector