



# Pilton Community College

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113515  
**LEA** Devon  
**Inspection number** 279184  
**Inspection dates** 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Anthony Shield AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Chaddiford Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Barnstaple
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Devon EX31 1RB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01271 374381
<b>Number on roll</b>	1430	<b>Fax number</b>	01271 349049
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Roy Gardner
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Juby

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pilton Community College is a larger-than-average comprehensive school, situated on the outskirts of Barnstaple. It has specialist status as a Language College, and is also a training college. The student population is largely White British, with comparatively few students from other ethnic heritages. The social background of students is mixed, and they are drawn from both Barnstaple itself and its surrounding villages. The school is popular with parents and is over-subscribed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Pilton Community College is a good school, where standards are continuing to improve and where both staff and students are respected and valued. Teachers and students feel confident about themselves and what they can achieve. Exceptional leadership by the principal and good teaching have combined to maintain high achievement and generate improvements in recent years.

There is strong sense of community and students get on well with each other. The college is also at the heart of its local community, developing productive relationships with partner institutions and with the wider community through its language college status.

Students make good progress throughout the college, and particularly in English and mathematics. As a result, students have a strong foundation in basic skills to explore and enjoy learning in other subjects. Although improving, standards remain average overall for the proportion of students achieving five or more higher grades at GCSE. The college has rightly identified, as a priority, the use of assessment, which does not always set precise learning targets for individual students or ensure that planning is closely matched to the wide range of ability of students.

Leadership and management are effective in providing a committed drive for further development. The college is reflective and has good management systems in place to promote realistic self-evaluation. As a result, the college's capacity to improve further is good. A committed team of governors offers both challenge and support. The college accurately evaluates its own effectiveness as good, and provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards, particularly by improving the proportion of students, especially the more able, attaining five or more grades A\*–C at GCSE.
- Ensure that work is closely matched to the needs of individual students, particularly the more able, and that the assessment of their progress makes clear to students how they can improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Students' achievements are good throughout the school. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is broadly average, although there are fewer students reaching higher levels at this stage than in most schools. The significantly higher-than-average standards attained by students in English and mathematics at GCSE are therefore particularly noteworthy.

Students make a good start through Years 7 to 9 and by the end of this key stage, overall standards are above average. Attainment in science in particular is significantly higher than average. Although the proportion of more able students reaching the higher levels in English is below average in the national tests in Year 9, many of these

students have caught up by the time they take GCSE examinations in Year 11. The achievement of more able students throughout the college is a priority for further improvement.

Standards overall in GCSE examinations are average, although in a number of subjects in 2005, including English, mathematics, geography, physics and design and technology, they were better than average. The school is justifiably proud of the higher-than-average proportion of students who gained five or more grades A\*–G at GCSE, and the fact that all students gained at least one GCSE pass. The percentage of students attaining five or more grades A\*–C was average, and was below the challenging statutory target agreed by governors. Although girls do better than boys, the difference is not significant, and both boys and girls make good progress. The college has successfully reduced the gender gap since the last inspection report. Students with learning difficulties also make good progress.

Relatively high proportions of both boys and girls study either French or German. Some do both, a reflection of the college's status as a language college. Results in 2005 were satisfactory, and the challenging targets set were narrowly missed, although the results in both French and German in 2004 were significantly higher than average.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students' good personal development and growing maturity is reflected in their positive attitudes towards learning. They enjoy coming to college. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and they respond well to the additional opportunities for personal and cultural development provided by language college status.

Students show consideration for their own and each other's safety, and report that they feel safe at school. Through good opportunities for group work, they develop the social skills and personal qualities needed for their future working life. Both year and school councils give students a practical and meaningful chance to participate in the college's development. They take seriously these and other opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the community. Students respond well to the many opportunities for an active lifestyle, and the school has been awarded Sportsmark with distinction. Students have given a strong welcome to the school's promotion of healthier meals.

Attendance rates have been declining, but recent improvements have reversed this trend. Overall, attendance is satisfactory. Behaviour is satisfactory. Although many instances of courteous and sensitive behaviour were observed, students report that unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons occasionally hinders progress. The rate of fixed-term exclusions is high. The college takes a firm line with misbehaviour, but does not analyse exclusion data sufficiently to monitor how effective its approach has been.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students make good progress because of effective teaching and their positive attitudes. Some teaching is outstanding and the college has put improving the quality of teaching and learning at the heart of its improvement strategy, seeking to raise the quality of all teaching to that of the best.

In discussion, students confirm that teaching is motivating them to do their best and, as a result, they enjoy the challenges presented. In lessons, students are both attentive and interested. They respond well to the probing questions of their teachers in class discussions. Teachers know their subjects well, plan carefully and use a variety of approaches to ensure students are actively engaged. At its best, teaching is inspirational and students work with confidence, solving problems independently of the teacher, as was observed in a Year 11 art lesson. Where teaching is less effective, students are not always set tasks which are matched to their ability. When this happens, it is usually the level of challenge for the more able students that is missing. In a small number of lessons, poor behaviour is not adequately managed by the teacher. Most teachers consistently mark students' work and include helpful comments. In lessons, however, students do not always know how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Students enjoy the opportunities and challenges presented by the well-constructed curriculum. They themselves comment that 'they have lots of opportunities' to learn because the curriculum is so wide ranging. There are, for example, considerable opportunities to study a range of foreign languages, both on the timetable, where most students study two languages in Years 7 – 9, and in extra-curricular clubs. A redesigned personal development course has sharpened the focus on students' personal development. The curriculum is well planned to ensure students are given a good insight into the world of work. A strong focus on provision in the arts is recognised by the award of Artsmark Gold. The college has rightly focused on developing an increasing range of vocational courses for older students and some follow personally planned timetables. Vocational courses, such as construction, are provided through effective collaboration with a partner college. More able students can take languages early or study a course in critical thinking.

The college offers an outstanding programme of enrichment activities, visitors and visits, and a high proportion of students participate in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Music and sport are particularly popular. The annual production, in rehearsal during the inspection, is an excellent opportunity for students to participate publicly in drama, dance and music.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The college's effective procedures for care and guidance enable students to feel confident that adults care about their success and will go out of their way to help them. They feel safe from bullying and know that action will be swift and effective. The links with partner primary schools are particularly effective in ensuring that students settle easily. Good guidance is offered at all important stages to ease transition. Students are also offered comprehensive careers advice. Child protection and health and safety procedures are securely in place, and there are good links with other agencies to ensure students' well-being.

Comprehensive procedures for monitoring students' academic progress and setting targets alongside parents and the students themselves have recently been introduced. As a result, their impact on improving the college's ability to track students' progress and intervene early if needed has so far been limited.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Good leadership and management at all levels are enabling the college to move forward confidently. The principal's inspirational and committed leadership provides a very clear direction for the school. Through valuing everybody's contribution, he has given staff the confidence to take a full part in self-review and college improvement. College values are widely shared and there is a good understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. The principal is very well supported by his vice principal and leadership team.

The college is at the heart of its community. Its outstanding links with partner schools and colleges are very productive. Language college status is providing a strong impetus for making links with the wider, international community.

Effective procedures for checking on teaching are in place, and dovetail neatly with the college's robust performance management procedures. Improving teaching and learning is at the heart of the college's drive for improvement. Management systems for checking teaching and the work of departments are comprehensive, and the annual departmental review offers heads of department good opportunities to reflect and set the agenda for further development. Heads of department and heads of year are making a good and increasingly effective contribution. The college improvement plan is a detailed document which provides a good basis for further improvement. However, the match between subject plans and whole-college priorities is not always consistent. A closer relationship would ensure a sharper focus on improvement.

The college has the confidence of parents and the community it serves. The views of all stakeholders, including parents, students and staff, have been canvassed and are taken into account in planning improvements. Governors are knowledgeable and aware. They have a firm grasp of their role and play an active part in planning and monitoring. As a result of the college's strong culture of both support and challenge, and given

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the significant improvements recently made, the college is very well placed to make further gains.



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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

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

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

<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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

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

Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. We particularly enjoyed talking to you and were impressed by the sensible way in which you answered our questions. It is encouraging that so many of you think it is a good place to be.

Here are some of the main findings from our report

You are taught well and as a result are making good progress.

The college has a real sense of community in which staff and students care for each other.

The college is an important focus for the community in Barnstaple but also, through its language college status, for the wider and international community.

Most of you achieve particularly well in English, mathematics and science, which is giving you the foundation for good achievement in other subjects.

Many of you develop good personal and confident social skills which help prepare you well for your future beyond school.

There is an excellent range of clubs and enrichment activities. We enjoyed watching a rehearsal of "Henry the Tudor dude". I am sure the production went well!

Leaders and managers at all levels carry out their responsibilities well.

These are the things that could be better

Standards are improving, but we think that more of you could achieve five or more good passes at GCSE.

Work in lessons is not always matched to your individual need and you do not always know how you can improve.

Thanks you once again for your courtesy during our visit. Good luck with your work in the future!