



King Edward VI Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113520
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279186
Inspection dates 26 April 2006 to 27 April 2006
Reporting inspector Russell Jordan HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Ashburton Road
School category	Community		Totnes
Age range of pupils	11 to 19		Devon TQ9 5JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01803 869200
Number on roll	1693	Fax number	01803 869201
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr Stephen Jones

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11 to 19	26 April 2006 - 27 April 2006	279186

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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

King Edward VI Community College is a large, mixed comprehensive school in Totnes, Devon, with a very large sixth form. Most students are White British. In 2002, King Edward VI was designated a performing arts specialist school. The attainment of students on entry to the college is around the national average. The number of students with special educational needs is below the national average and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is low. Since 2003, students have not worn a college uniform.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

King Edward VI is a good college and offers good value for money. The college has addressed most issues from the last inspection successfully, although it has been slow to secure higher quality teaching and learning in some of the weaker subject areas. The college has a reliable view of its overall effectiveness and the self-evaluation process is thorough and accurate. As yet, managers have made uneven progress in securing improvements in the areas identified for development, but there is good capacity for further improvement.

Self-evaluation includes extensive consultation with both parents and students. The college's involvement of the student voice in the running of the college is a strength and students speak confidently and responsibly about their experiences in the college. Students enjoy college, are keen to learn and feel safe.

Standards are above average by the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Students' progress is good overall in the college and in the sixth form but it is uneven across subjects. The quality of teaching is good in the college and satisfactory in the sixth form, but better practice is not yet being spread with sufficient effectiveness across the college.

The curriculum meets the needs of the students well, and is outstanding in the sixth form. The college's specialist status in performing arts has clearly added to the experience of all students. Vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties or disabilities receive outstanding support from the college in very effective partnership with other agencies.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The college is accurate in its evaluation that the effectiveness of the very large sixth form is good. Students appreciate the very good relationships that grow between students and teachers and the informal nature of much of the life in this part of the college. Students take a very wide range of subjects, both academic and vocational, frequently mixing the two, so that many enjoy the possibility of achieving qualifications that carefully match those needed for their chosen careers. The curriculum is outstanding, having undergone some radical and imaginative changes. Students who enter the sixth form from other schools progress as well as those who come from within the college, and say that they feel welcome and valued. Students with particular educational needs speak very highly of the support they receive. Students' progress is good and standards are above average overall, but there are variations across subjects. Teaching is satisfactory. Although much of the learning is independent, teachers do not require that students take a sufficiently active part in lessons by initiating and arguing, for example. When students are given the opportunity to work creatively in a challenging atmosphere, they respond enthusiastically.

What the school should do to improve further

- Spread more effectively, the better practice in teaching and learning that encourages active participation from students and improves progress
- Ensure consistent rigour in the implementation and monitoring of whole-college initiatives.
- Continue to raise standards and close the gap in standards between girls and boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards at Key Stage 3 are above the national average in science and mathematics but average in English. Students' progress through Key Stage 3 in 2005 was average overall, but was significantly lower than average in English. At Key Stage 4, standards are above the national average overall. In English they are consistently above the national average, but are average in mathematics. The proportion of students achieving five A* to C grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) has been above the national average in three of the past five years. Significantly more girls than boys achieve these grades. The college sets challenging targets and all students make good progress overall by the end of Key Stage 4 compared to their starting points on entry to the college. In 2005, students' progress through Key Stage 4 was outstanding in English but was unsatisfactory in mathematics. Standards of literacy are high. However, a significant number of students do not achieve their potential in mathematics and standards of numeracy are lower than they ought to be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and well-being are good, and outstanding in the sixth form owing to the strength of support from teachers and the outstanding relationships established in the sixth form. Students enjoy college and are keen to learn. Their confidence and self-esteem are enhanced through an excellent range of opportunities, particularly in performing arts, and through the very strong contributions they make to the community. Students say they feel safe in college and that they know how to get help if problems arise. Students' behaviour is mostly good in lessons and around the college. Students commented that incidents of bullying are rare and that, if they do occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students are well informed about how to live healthy lives and put into practice the good advice they receive in lessons and from outside speakers. Students make informed choices from the excellent range of healthy foods available in the dining halls. The college council has a highly-valued voice in the running of the college. For example, the views of students have influenced the college improvement plan to include an action point regarding the creation of a learning atmosphere in which all can prosper.

Attendance is satisfactory in the college and in the sixth form and action is being taken to improve this. The college effectively promotes the principle that spiritual and moral issues should be explored through all aspects of college life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are good overall and satisfactory in the sixth form, although this is inconsistent across the college. Combined with the positive attitudes of most students, they result in good progress. Students generally know their targets and what they have to do to improve, although teachers do not consistently use the targets in the classroom to ensure that students make maximum progress. Students themselves are very clear that they respond best to opportunities for active learning, including discussion. The best lessons are well structured, with clear learning objectives and challenging, well-paced activities which encourage students to learn independently or collaboratively. Students in these lessons get very good feedback, helping them to improve. All these features came together in a Year 8 lesson, in which the enthusiasm of the teacher and a challenging pace helped students make excellent gains in understanding. However, in less successful lessons weak planning means it is not clear what students are expected to learn. Teachers direct the lessons tightly giving limited opportunities for students to take an active part in their learning. Marking is often not informative enough to enable students to improve their work. Sometimes teachers do not manage behaviour well. The college promptly identifies students with special learning needs and talents, and these students often make good progress, helped by dedicated support. The college successfully involves parents in students' learning, for example, in discussing progress at academic review days.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is good and has some excellent features, especially meeting the needs of students aged 14 - 19. The needs of individuals and groups of students are very well catered for.

A rich and diverse range of courses is offered, including the traditional academic courses, vocational and work-based courses. A strength is the challenging set of 'Routeways' across the college from the age of fourteen through to nineteen which meet the needs of students well. An excellent feature of the curriculum is the variety of arts courses offered in Years 10 and 11 and the sixth form that reflects the specialist performing arts status of the college. Provision is further enriched by students' involvement in an extensive range of extra-curricular events and courses, workshops, seminars, clubs, sporting fixtures, field trips, visits, visiting speakers and performers.

International and multi-cultural dimensions are strong features of these events and make a powerful contribution to students' spiritual and cultural development.

Students are well prepared for employment and further and higher education in almost all respects. All Year 10 students experience a working environment and all study information and communication technology, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. In this respect, statutory requirements are now met.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of the opportunities to contribute to the community through courses and extra-curricular events, and the majority do so.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for students are good both through to Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. Individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Students are encouraged to discuss personal problems or concerns and feel confident about approaching an adult or another student. The college provides a safe, secure and supportive environment for learning. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are firmly established. The college has outstanding arrangements for identifying and supporting vulnerable students and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Support for these students is reinforced by the college's liaison with a wide range of support agencies and through the work of very effective teaching and learning support assistants. The learning support department has excellent links with parents and carers, who rightly praise its work highly. Students value the preparation for joining the college and, in Year 9, the comprehensive arrangements for making their Key Stage 4 option choices. Advice on post-16 education and career choice is equally valued.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team has addressed most issues from the last inspection effectively and leaders at all levels have good capacity to secure further improvements. The college improvement plan is focused on clearly prioritised areas for development. The first of these priorities continues to be the raising of standards and students' achievement, and this drives the work of leaders of the school at all levels. However, managers have made uneven progress in securing improvements in the areas identified for development and the implementation of whole-college initiatives has been inconsistent. The senior management have recognised this and have begun to monitor with increased rigour.

Managers have made good progress in using data to support further improvement in standards and the progress made by students. Monitoring systems are now more rigorous, but this improved use of data has not yet had an impact in all subject areas. Teachers do not consistently use targets to ensure that students make maximum progress in the classroom.

Managers have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning, although inspectors found this to be less secure in the sixth form. Better practice in teaching is not yet being spread with sufficient effectiveness throughout the college and improvements have been slow to come through in some subject areas.

Governors are effective at holding the leaders of the college to account. They are extremely supportive of the college but are also able to challenge appropriately.

The college's self-evaluation process is thorough, includes extensive consultation with parents and students and enables the school to have a reliable view of itself. The college's involvement of the student voice in the running of the college is a strength.

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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?	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	2
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2	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	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

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?	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	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	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 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

I am writing to share with you the main judgements that we made when we came to inspect your college in April. Many of you spoke to us and told us about what you are learning and about the college in general. We want to thank you for welcoming us so well and for sharing with us your views and experiences so openly.

You told us you enjoy college. You are eager to learn and your behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the college, although a few of you need to improve your behaviour so that you can all make the most of your lessons. You told us you generally feel safe and are well supported by a team of tutors who know you well. Your attendance is satisfactory at present and needs to improve so that you can get the most benefit from the opportunities the college offers.

Your results are good but we think you can do even better and make better progress. The leadership team is already aware of this and is working on ways to help, but we have asked them to make sure that:

all lessons across the college are as good as the best ones you have at present and allow you to take an active part

your results and progress across the college continue to improve and that boys do as well as girls in all subjects

leaders at all levels of the college should put in place more consistently, and monitor more frequently and carefully, the improvements they are making to help you all reach higher standards and make better progress.

We enjoyed the time we spent at your school and thank you, once again, for your warm welcome. We look forward to following the progress of the school.