

Teignmouth Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113529
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	279189
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Mary Massey HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1071
6th form	164
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Tony Gray
Date of previous school inspection	16 December 1999
School address	Exeter Road Teignmouth TQ14 9HZ
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Teignmouth Community College is the only state provider of secondary education in the coastal town of Teignmouth. It is an average sized comprehensive school with the majority of students from White British backgrounds. The number of students eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. In 2006 one in four students had a learning difficulty or disability. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The college became a specialist mathematics and computing college in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Teignmouth Community College is a good school with some outstanding features. Students enjoy being at the college. One parent wrote, 'My daughter has gone from strength to strength since she started... She goes to school smiling and comes home smiling.'

Standards are broadly average at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. In contrast to the national trend, boys reach higher standards than girls at GCSE and make very good progress. Low aspiration which affects motivation has an impact on the achievement of some girls. Attainment is also affected by the poor attendance of a few students, although the attendance rate is improving. Students as a whole make good progress because they are taught well. In addition to teaching exciting and stimulating lessons, the most effective teachers regularly provide students with constructive feedback and guidance about how they can improve. However, this is not yet the case in all lessons. The curriculum is good, but recently introduced innovative modifications to the Years 10 and 11 curriculum have not yet had time to make an impact on attainment.

Parents rightly feel that the college prepares students well for the future. One parent wrote, 'I have noticed a tremendous difference in my son over the past few years, especially in his confidence and willingness to study. This we attribute to the atmosphere and good teaching at the college.' The care, guidance and support that students receive are outstanding. As a result they speak warmly about the positive and respectful relationships within the college, and the fact that many staff 'go the extra mile' to help and encourage them. Substantial numbers of students take part in a wide variety of other activities outside the normal school day. These are often exciting opportunities that extend students' experience and develop their skills and confidence, including sports and games, music, drama, productions and visits abroad. One student said, 'You are never bored!'

The principal has made a number of creative changes which have had a positive effect on achievement since his appointment. The number of support staff has increased significantly. They make a very constructive contribution to the success of the college, not only through allowing teachers to concentrate fully on teaching and learning but also by being involved in the system of mentoring for older students. The new teaching and learning centre provides academic rigour within a supportive environment for students who are having difficulties learning within the mainstream college. As a result these students make the same good progress as their peers.

Upgrading of accommodation has had a positive impact on the motivation and thus on the achievement of students, particularly in performing arts and in PE. As a result of the college's specialist status, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities have improved, which means that all students have regular, easy access to computers and the school website allows them to access their work from home. Improvements to the security of the site contribute to the sense of safety that students say they feel.

Leadership and management are good. Staff trust the principal's judgement and his ability to lead them effectively. They feel that their work is valued by the senior team and all share the ambition to raise standards by improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the college. Both senior leaders and middle managers are outstandingly effective in setting clear direction for the improvement of the college, and the progress made in the last three years shows that the college has an outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Its partnerships with other institutions enhance students' opportunities well. The college has a good understanding of the sixth form's strengths and weaknesses and its priorities for development are well chosen. The capacity to improve further is good. Increased numbers in the sixth form mean that it is now financially self-sufficient and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Challenge less effective classroom practice so that high quality teaching which focuses on students' learning is extended more consistently across the college.
- Ensure that assessment strategies are implemented so that subject teachers inform students more consistently about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve specific subject skills.
- Ensure that girls' achievement matches that of boys.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students enter the school with broadly average ability. Between Years 7 and 9 they make good progress. Standards in English, mathematics and science tests at the end of Year 9 are just above the national average and are improving slowly year on year. Attainment at GCSE rose in line with challenging targets to just above the national average until 2005. The students who sat GCSE in 2006 had lower than average ability on entry to the college. Although their GCSE results were below the national average, students made good progress considering their starting points and other contextual factors. The gap between the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE and the percentage achieving five A* to C grades including English and mathematics narrowed substantially in 2006. Current Year 11 students are making good progress towards challenging targets, as are Year 10 students following a new curriculum. Attainment at GCSE is outstanding in both art and drama.

Over the last three years the college has been particularly successful in raising the achievement of boys, who now achieve higher standards than girls at GCSE. Some middle and higher ability girls do not achieve as well as they should, and this is often linked with poor attendance.

In the sixth form students reach standards that are broadly average and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and capabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Most students enjoy college, attend well and are keen to learn. Behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the college site. However, if behaviour is less good in some lessons, this is usually linked with less inspiring teaching. When bullying incidents are brought to the attention of staff students are confident that they will be dealt with effectively. Students say that what they value most is the willingness of staff

to give their own time to support them and the encouragement they receive to help them achieve well.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their understanding of other cultures and societies is the weakest aspect, although they do benefit from a range of visits that introduce them to cultures other than their own. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and most appreciate the commitment of the college in offering healthy food choices. Students make a significant contribution to the community with a wide range of charitable activities organised through an effective student council. The development of workplace skills is good and students are well prepared for the world of work.

Students' personal development and well-being in the sixth form are good. Their enjoyment is reflected in their good behaviour and attendance, their knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe, and the contribution they make to the college as a whole and the local community. Opportunities for students to involve themselves actively in the lives of younger students, for example as mentors, are limited; students themselves would welcome additional responsibilities. Students recognise substantial changes in their personal development. One, for example, spoke of being 'more confident, a much better person now', and another spoke of joining the sixth form as 'the best thing I've ever done!'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good and the college's recent focus on improving the quality of teaching has had an impact on students' progress. This judgement reflects the high degree of satisfaction amongst parents and carers.

In the most effective lessons students are absorbed in their work and able to learn independently. They enjoy lessons, make good progress in response to good teaching and thrive on the high expectations made of them. Students are able to explain what they are doing and why. In these lessons students actively involve themselves in a variety of activities and teachers have both an excellent knowledge of the subject and a thorough understanding of individual students' needs. Learning is least successful where objectives are not obvious, there is insufficient pace and the lesson is too teacher-centred. Teachers are encouraged to use assessment for learning in their teaching and to use ICT to support this. In many lessons, students know their targets and what they need to do in order to improve. This is very noticeable at GCSE with well attended revision clubs. However, some students are given insufficient specific subject feedback through formative marking of work and are unaware of how to progress from one level to the next. There are also inconsistencies both in the provision of rewards and in the application of sanctions for poor behaviour.

Sixth form students are taught well and effectively. They benefit from clear assessments of their progress and helpful guidance about how to improve. Students comment appreciatively on how much support they get both during and outside lessons and how much time teachers are willing to give.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college's approach to curriculum provision is thoughtful and innovative. The new curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides a choice of subject combinations that meet the needs of each individual, so that each may take an appropriate 'Learning Pathway' in the journey from 14 to 19, ranging from wholly academic or vocational courses to those involving work-related learning. It is coherent, flexible and potentially fit for purpose. The school is working to remedy some initial difficulties in implementation. Mathematics and computing specialist status means that all students follow an ICT course to GCSE.

In the sixth form, students have a wide variety of subjects to choose from, both academic and vocational. Students often take a mixture of the two, and report that they are very happy with their choices and with the opportunities that have opened up for them as a result.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The level of care, guidance and support students receive is outstanding. Safeguarding arrangements are secure. Younger students talk positively about how the strong links with their primary schools and the support from peer mentors helped them settle into the college quickly. Effective provision is made for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those identified as having behavioural or attendance problems prior to transition.

Additional support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is provided through a well organised and multi-skilled team of teaching assistants. Parents feel their children make excellent academic and social progress. Links with external agencies are excellent and support those who are vulnerable or at risk. There is an effective partnership with the education welfare service to raise levels of attendance. This aspect of the college's work is very thorough and there has been a steady improvement over the last three years. However, attendance levels are still below the national average for all schools.

Academic review days are held each term. Students who are underachieving are identified and intervention strategies put in place. These meetings are much appreciated by most parents. The college participates in the Aim Higher scheme to raise aspirations of students to enter higher education. Mentors from Exeter University provide positive role models and work with students to support them in their studies.

The care, guidance and support provided for students in the sixth form are also outstanding. Sixth form leaders, tutors and subject teachers devote much time and effort to ensuring that students receive the best possible assistance in determining their choice of courses, monitoring their progress and making decisions about their futures. Students recognise and appreciate their work very much.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management in both the main college and the sixth form are good. The principal has a clear vision for the college which places students' achievement at the heart of the college's work. He is supported by a very competent leadership team whose influence is felt throughout the college. Senior leaders are very clear about the college's strengths and areas for development, and share their knowledge with all staff. There is a strong sense that the entire college community is focused on raising standards through improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Very effective systems are in place to check how well the college is doing. Efficient use of ICT provides systematic analysis of data. This enables managers to make well considered judgements about strengths and weaknesses and allows them to draw up effective plans for improvement. These plans lead to focused professional training in order to increase staff skills. Middle managers are well supported in their role and have the confidence and independence to act creatively to raise standards. Although these systems have only been introduced recently they are both thorough and wide-ranging. There is some evidence of their impact on students' progress but not yet enough on their attainment.

Governors are supportive and loyal and challenge the principal appropriately. They visit the college regularly, are familiar to staff and take part in lesson observations in order to feel fully involved.

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Annex A

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2
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	3	3
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	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	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	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

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	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I am sure you will remember that your college was inspected on 21 and 22 March. The inspection team was impressed by your polite and friendly welcome and would like to thank you for the honest and open way in which you talked to us. In return, I would like to tell you about the inspection findings.

Teignmouth Community College is a good school. There have been many changes recently both to the buildings and to the curriculum which will make a difference to how well you achieve. Some of these changes are a result of mathematics and computing specialist status, and the use of ICT both for you and your teachers makes an important contribution to your progress. Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to give you the right care, support and guidance to achieve as well as you can, and as a result the majority of you make good progress. Most of the teaching is good, but we have asked the headteacher to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best ones. We have also asked that all teachers consistently give you feedback about your work and make sure you know exactly what you need to do to improve in each subject.

Although all of you make good progress, it was interesting for us to find that in contrast to most schools, boys achieve better than girls at your college. We have asked the headteacher to find ways of encouraging girls in particular to do even better. One way in which all of you can contribute to your own success is by making sure that you attend school regularly.

You have very good teachers and support staff who are all working hard to do their best for you. I am sure you will support them.