



Sir John Hunt Community Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113533
LEA Plymouth
Inspection number 279192
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew Redpath HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Lancaster Gardens
School category	Community		Whiteleigh
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		Plymouth, Devon PL5 4AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 201020
Number on roll	897	Fax number	01752 201020
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Ms Ann Box
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr John Sykes

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	Inspection number 279192
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four inspectors.

Description of the school

Sir John Hunt Community Sports College is a specialist sports college which is slightly smaller than the average size nationally of secondary schools. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is above the national average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Most students come from the local neighbourhood, which includes areas of significant deprivation. Almost all students are of White British origin and are fluent in English. In 2002 the college took over another school which was experiencing difficulties. The two have recently been merged and now occupy one site. Some buildings have been improved and further changes are being planned which should result in the college becoming a community learning centre.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Sir John Hunt Community Sports College is a good college which has a growing reputation in the community. This view is consistent with the college's self-evaluation which is based on strong procedures for reviewing teaching and students' performance. Students make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the college. Students who experience difficulty with their learning and behaviour make very good progress because of the excellent support provided by the college. However, some higher-attaining students are not always fully stretched and too few get the highest results.

Teaching is good. The high expectations of teachers encourage students to work hard and behave well. There are good opportunities for students to participate in the life of the college and for them to have their say. The care and guidance provided for students is good and supported extremely well by a wide range of links with external agencies. The college's work as a specialist sports college is very effective in promoting students' self-esteem and raising their aspirations. Students enjoy coming to college and feel they achieve well. Many take part in the numerous lunchtime and after-school clubs. The vast majority of parents are happy with the college, although a few have concerns over the standard of students' behaviour. The acting principal and senior managers are an effective team and demonstrate a strong commitment to college improvement. They have successfully led the college through a period of considerable change involving the amalgamation of two schools onto one site. These changes limit comparison with judgements reached at the time of the last inspection. However, the college's ability to identify weaker areas and engage the whole staff in raising standards demonstrates a strong capacity to improve. Some parts of the accommodation are sub-standard, although the college uses resources well and provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- analyse the progress made by the most capable students and set suitable targets for them to attain high examination and test results
- extend teachers' planning so lessons include sufficient challenge for higher-attaining students
- work with the local authority to secure the earliest possible improvement to areas of sub-standard accommodation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good teaching and a clear focus on raising achievement enable students to meet challenging targets and make good progress. Students start in Year 7 with below-average standards and there is always a relatively high proportion of students with learning difficulties. In both key stages progress in mathematics and science is consistently good. Progress in English has varied in recent years, but is now good. At

the end of Year 11 the percentage of students who gain five or more higher general certificate in secondary education (GCSE) grades is below the national average, but high when compared with students' achievement on entry. The percentage of students gaining five or more graded results is high. There is a wide variation between the high results in physical education (PE) and technology subjects, and the low results in history and modern foreign languages. Results for the vocational information and communication and technology (IT) course are exceptionally high. The college monitors the results and is taking effective action to address weaknesses.

Lower-attaining students and those who experience difficulty with their learning make very good progress as a result of the college's excellent range of strategies to support them. Progress for the higher-attaining students is satisfactory. There is some variation in the performance of boys and girls but these are not significantly more than those found nationally. There is clear evidence to support the college's judgement that overall progress and achievement are good.

Grade 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students enjoy coming to the college and speak of how they are 'treated like adults'. The college seeks students' views and responds to their suggestions. As a result, action has been taken to make college dinners healthier, refurbish the toilets and improve arrangements for dealing with any bullying. Students appreciate the efforts made by the college to help them and this has led to several improving their attendance and progress. Attendance generally is a little below the national average but the college is working hard to improve it. Students have a good grasp of moral and social issues, which is promoted through the discussion of topical themes in tutorial 'thought for the day' sessions. Students are considerate, behave well and have positive attitudes. These qualities are effectively promoted through the 'goal' reward system which recognises students' efforts and achievements.

Students' spiritual and cultural development is promoted very effectively through assemblies and the college's work as a specialist sports college. The emphasis on being physically fit and having a positive outlook helps improve students' self-esteem and encourages them to adopt healthier lifestyles. Older students learn to take responsibility when they become prefects, or act as peer mediators and 'guardians' with younger students. Students make a positive contribution to the community, for example, through charitable work. Students develop a good knowledge of the world of work through the careers programme and when they participate in work experience and the work-related learning courses. The inspection evidence supports the college's view that the personal development and well-being of students are good.

Grade 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Senior managers observe lessons regularly and have an accurate view of teaching across the college. Some teaching is outstanding, particularly when lessons are carefully planned and resources such as electronic whiteboards are used imaginatively to gain students' attention. Good pace and a variety of activities keep students interested and help them to work hard. In more ordinary lessons there is too much teacher direction and too little time is given to reviewing what students have learned. This limits opportunities for students to explore their own ideas and share them with others. Teachers' relationships with students are very good and there is an element of fun in many lessons.

There is very effective use of support staff and special programmes which help students who struggle to catch up. Students are often taught in classes according to their ability. However, teachers' planning does not always include opportunities for stretching the highest-attaining students. This is recognised by the college as an area for development.

Assessment is satisfactory. New procedures being introduced are providing teachers with more accurate information on how to plan students' work. Students are aware of areas they are seeking to improve and regularly discuss their progress with their form tutors. Target setting is used particularly well with students who have learning difficulties, helping them to monitor and improve their learning and behaviour. The college has been successful in improving the involvement of parents in their children's learning through the college review days. Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The college provides a good curriculum which is significantly enhanced through its work as a specialist sports college. When they join the college in Year 7 many students need to improve their literacy. The curriculum is adapted especially well to support lower-attaining students and those who have learning difficulties. Provision includes part-time attendance at a support centre, extra help in class, work in small groups, and individual IT-based programmes. Until recently, less emphasis has been placed on the requirements of more able and talented students.

In Years 10 and 11, the college offers courses which suit students' interests and aptitude and ensure a very high proportion leave college with some form of qualification. This includes a range of GCSE subjects, business studies, and an 'alternative' programme based on basic skills and work experience. Outdoor education is a strong feature of the curriculum and provides excellent opportunities for students to develop teamwork and leadership skills.

A rich range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs and activities enhances and extends students' learning. As one student commented, "there's lots to do here!"

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The college has a very positive ethos founded on care and respect. There is an extensive range of support within the college which allows students to discuss and resolve any personal problems. Students report they feel safe and are aware of how to get help if they have any concerns. Excellent arrangements for safeguarding students are in place. There are well-established procedures for child protection which are reviewed regularly. Incidents of bullying or serious misbehaviour are carefully recorded and dealt with. Any students at risk are identified early and given support. The college provides excellent support for students with a wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. There is less support for the most capable students to help them attain high examination and test results. The college is extremely successful in drawing on support from other agencies and works closely with parents.

Thorough induction arrangements, supported by excellent links with local primary colleges, ensure new students settle in quickly. Older students receive high quality guidance and advice to help them choose optional subjects and prepare them for their future education and careers. The college feels that care, guidance and support is good and this view is supported by the inspection evidence.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The acting principal provides good leadership and his senior team ably support him. Together, and in partnership with the local education authority, they have moved the college forward in its drive to improve standards, which fell recently following the amalgamation. Senior managers generally use information effectively to check how well students are achieving. However, this information is not yet analysed fully in some subjects to show the extent to which some of the most able students are achieving their potential. There is a strong and motivating emphasis on developing the role of middle managers. This has included the appointment of some new subject co-ordinators who have benefited from appropriate training. Each department is reviewing its work, with senior staff performing an advisory and quality assurance role. There is a good mix of experienced staff and recent appointments who share a common sense of purpose. The college has been successfully located on one site, although much accommodation is of a temporary nature and some of it is sub-standard.

The governing body has a sound knowledge of the college and ensures that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. It is effectively involved in the budget setting and monitoring processes. Resources are well deployed to support the college's efforts to raise standards. The college takes account of the views of parents and other groups which have helped it to become a valued community resource. The college provides

good value for money and is well placed to improve further. The college evaluates its leadership and management as good and the inspection evidence supports this view.

Grade 2

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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	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	1	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

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

Sir John Hunt Community Sports College Lancaster Gardens Whiteleigh Plymouth Devon PL5 4AA

24 October 2005

Dear Students

As you know, your college was inspected on 19 and 20 October 2005. I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your college. I thank those of you who helped the inspection by talking to us about your work and your life in the college. Many of your parents or carers returned a questionnaire and we also took their views and concerns into account when making judgements. Here are the main points:

We believe Sir John Hunt is a good college

the headteacher and those with responsibility run the college well to ensure you do your best and that you are cared for well; they also work closely with people from outside the college to offer you help and support

teachers and assistants have your best interests in mind and treat you with respect; you respond by behaving well

through the year and college councils you play an important part in improving the college and your ideas are acted upon

the vast majority of you and your parents are happy with the college

becoming a sports college has helped many of you to lead healthier lifestyles; the very wide range of clubs and extra activities on offer encourages you to develop new interests and become more confident young people

if you experience difficulty with your work or behaviour the college supports you extremely well and helps you improve

to get even better, the college needs to help more of you gain higher levels in your exam results; you can help your teachers in this by aiming just a little higher than you do now and trying just a little bit harder

staff are aware that some of the college buildings need improving and there are plans for this to happen; in the meantime, you can help by looking after your classrooms and grounds.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath HMI (Lead Inspector)