



Whitby Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121667
LEA North Yorkshire
Inspection number 281074
Inspection dates 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Terry McDermott CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Prospect Hill
School category	Community		Whitby
Age range of pupils	14 to 18		North Yorkshire YO21 1LA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01947 602406
Number on roll	916	Fax number	01947 821169
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr N Slater
Date of previous inspection	13 September 1999	Headteacher	Ms R Totton

Age group 14 to 18	Inspection dates 10 October 2005 - 11 October 2005	Inspection number 281074
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Whitby Community College is a specialist technology college for 14 to 18 year olds. It is the only source of education for learners of this age within a radius of about twenty miles. It is of average size with a larger than average sixth form. Pupils enter the college in Year 10 with well above average standards. Almost all the pupils who attend the college are British. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. Nearly all the students in the sixth form attended in Years 10 and 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The college evaluates its own effectiveness as good. Inspectors disagree with this view and judge effectiveness to be inadequate. The quality of teaching is not good enough, and managers have not moved with sufficient speed or robustness to address this situation. This has caused both standards and achievement to fall.

The college provides a good physical environment for learning. It has well developed systems for recording performance information, and accurately tracks the progress its students are making.

The college has made insufficient progress since the last inspection although managers believe it has made good improvement. Standards have dropped, and the progress made by students has got worse. The quality of teaching has fallen. Though some of the issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed, some have not, and further significant weaknesses have arisen.

Leaders do not have the capacity to take the school forward. They have failed to demonstrate the ability to deal with issues with sufficient rigour and pace. As a result, too many students show significant underachievement and the college gives poor value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 4

The college believes the effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Inspectors judge effectiveness of the sixth form to be inadequate.

The sixth form operates an open access policy which has given many students the opportunity to develop in a supportive and familiar environment. Almost all of the students who embark on courses complete them. About three quarters of those who complete Year 13 move on to higher education.

Standards are below average and students do not make the progress they should. Achievement is inadequate. The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Students also cite inconsistencies in the support they receive. These have a direct impact on learning, particularly of male students. The recently appointed management team have identified robust strategies to tackle these weaknesses, but application of these has been too slow to yet have impact. The sixth form is not cost effective.

What the school should do to improve further

The leadership and management of the college should:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise the standards and achievement of all pupils
- ensure that governors and senior managers produce accurate and objective evaluations that reflect reality
- implement and monitor management strategies more rigorously to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they should.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The college thinks standards and achievement are good by Year 11 and satisfactory in the sixth form. Inspectors judge achievement and standards to be inadequate.

Students enter the college in Year 10 with standards which are well above average. However, by the end of Year 11, standards have fallen significantly. Students are therefore making inadequate progress in Years 10 and 11 in comparison with their starting points. Although a specialist technology college, the specialist subjects are not having enough impact on either raising standards or improving the quality of teaching.

Results in general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in 2003 were significantly below average and in 2004 they were worse. In 2005 there was an improvement at GCSE, but achievement was still lower than it should have been. General certificate of education advanced level (A-level) and advanced subsidiary (AS-level) results in the sixth form were below average in 2004 but showed a small improvement in 2005.

The college sets realistic and achievable targets based on the pupils' prior attainment. It fails consistently to reach them, by a wide margin.

Even though students enter the sixth form with below average standards, examination results indicate that their standards drop even further by the time they leave. Students are therefore failing to make adequate progress in the sixth form.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' attendance is in line with the national average. Students' attitudes and behaviour are mostly good but there is documentary evidence of occasional challenging behaviour from a minority of students. A few students interviewed during the inspection voiced some concerns about their own safety on the site and the college's records show that this view has validity. The college has proactively dealt with these occurrences. Many students take their responsibilities seriously as exemplified in the college council which has helped to focus the college's senior management on a number of important issues. However, as the meetings are usually led by a member of staff instead of a student, the college is losing a valuable opportunity to enhance students' personal development.

The 'laid back' ethos of the college and the comments made by some students during the inspection, demonstrates that the college does not always fully assist in promoting

a feeling of belonging. The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with moral and social being the main strengths. Students' personal development is enhanced through good use of the local and wider environment to prepare them for a future life in the community. Work experience is organised for all pupils and is helping them to get ready for their future economic well-being. The wide range of extra curricular activities and clubs are enjoyed by large numbers of students and help them develop an understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Inspectors judge that teaching and learning are inadequate throughout the college. Far too many lessons seen were inadequate. However, the college believes teaching and learning to be good.

Although the college has established a team of advanced skills teachers who spend considerable time coaching staff in order to improve the quality of classroom performance, the effect of this initiative is minimal. Examples of the best practice show rapid pace, questions which encourage pupils to think, and a range of teaching methods to meet individual learning needs. Where teaching is inadequate all of the above strengths are missing, it is often dull and does little to motivate and excite the pupils to want to learn. In these lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what their pupils can do, and standards and achievement suffer. Because teachers often give pupils work that is too easy, many pupils become bored and demonstrate an unwillingness to make oral contributions. Lesson planning lacks detail and work is rarely matched to the needs of all the learners.

The college tracks the progress of its learners on a regular basis but use of this assessment at subject level is inconsistent. The marking of pupils' work, for example, varies from the detailed, including accurate advice on how improvements may be made, to the cursory, in which there is little comment on the quality of the work completed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The college's view that it provides a good range of courses to meet the needs and aspirations of learners in the main college and the sixth form is accurate. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and, following a major review in 2004, more vocational courses are now on offer. As a result, learners new to the college benefit from both academic and work-related opportunities. Those students, for whom these option arrangements are not entirely suitable, are supported effectively by the personalised learning programme, which comprises of small group teaching and individual guidance.

Learners speak highly of the advice they receive on careers, and sixth form students are grateful for the college's support when they are applying for entrance to higher education. The college's formal curriculum is complemented by a wide variety of

extra-curricular and enrichment sessions, which include master classes for gifted and talented students, subject extension clubs, many sports activities and exchange visits to Sweden and Germany.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care provided by the college is good. Child protection systems and procedures are in place and are effective. Staff are proactive in dealing with any incidents and prompt attention is paid to occasional examples of challenging behaviour. There are occasional fire drills and good systems are in place to record and report accidents.

The college provides good support to any vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities through the wide use of internal and external support staff and through good monitoring systems and procedures. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress and are also quickly involved in any relevant issues linked to detention or fixed term exclusion.

The college has well thought out systems for the pastoral support and guidance of pupils but they are not consistently applied to academic guidance in the classroom or in students' workbooks. Extensive contacts with the local community, industry and commerce add to the effectiveness of this provision.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate though the college evaluates them to be good.

Examination results over the last few years have been significantly below average and students are making inadequate progress. The college has been slow to react to this and has recently started to address the problem with a range of initiatives and procedures, which are beginning to have a positive effect on attainment but there is a long way to go. Results in 2005 at GCSE, whilst not yet verified, still indicate inadequate achievement. Leadership and management have yet to show a sustained and adequate impact on the raising of standards and achievement.

The college's self-evaluation of its effectiveness is inaccurate and much too optimistic in many key areas. Leadership identifies the transfer arrangements into Year 10 as largely to blame for the shortcomings in pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11. Inspectors do not agree. Although the transfer arrangements have been in place for a considerable number of years, only recently has the college started to address the perceived problems with any rigour.

Procedures for monitoring the effectiveness of major aspects of the college, such as overall standards and teaching and learning, have recently been introduced and are well documented and clear. However, too little action has been taken too slowly to

address the root problem of inadequate teaching and the hoped for improvements are taking too long.

Students are involved in the development of the college via the college council, and parents' views are sought occasionally. Procedures for financial control are well developed and financial management is sound.

Governance is inadequate. The governing body carries out its responsibilities seriously, but is not rigorous enough in holding management to account, nor is it always accurate in its ordering of priorities. The college has failed to meet its agreed targets for several years and the governing body has now decided to reduce them to make them more attainable.

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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?	4	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	No
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
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?	4	4
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?	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?	4	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	
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

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for helping us to reach our judgements about your college.

We have judged that the college is in need of special measures to help it to improve. This means that some aspects of its work need outside help to be transformed. Many of you will recognise some of our judgements. We thank you again for your openness, and for the time you gave us on our short visit.

We found that the college's managers do not check the quality of teaching with enough concentration to ensure the quality of your learning. There was too much inconsistency in the quality of teaching allowed to go unchallenged, and this is affecting your progress significantly. This is the major source of our concern, as it was yours.

On the positive side, we feel that the curriculum provided for you by the college in all years is good, and that the teachers really do have your best interests at heart. These are clear strengths of the college which you should recognise and celebrate.

We ask you to help the college to improve. You must focus on your work in a mature way, not let yourselves be distracted, and allow those with other tasks to do, to carry them out quickly and quietly, with as little disruption to the normal operation of the college as possible.