



Felpham Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126080
LEA West Sussex
Inspection number 282057
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005
Reporting inspector Steffi Penny HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Felpham Way
School category	Community		Felpham
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 8EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01243 826511
Number on roll	1328	Fax number	01243 841021
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Geoffrey Tate
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mr Peter Cook

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 14 September 2005 - 15 September 2005	Inspection number 282057
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Felpham Community College is a mixed 11-18 community comprehensive that is bigger than average, and growing. It is a specialist mathematics and computing college with provision for adult education and a youth wing. Most of the students are White British with a small number coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Students enter the college with broadly average ability, although a quarter of students have learning difficulties and disabilities. A few students are learners of English as an additional language and a similar small number are looked after children. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is below average. The college continues to have difficulty in recruiting staff, partly due to the high cost of living in the area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Felpham Community College effectively provides a secure, safe environment in which students feel valued and enjoy their education. Students in Years 7-9 and in the sixth form reach their potential but those in Years 10 and 11, especially the boys, have yet to do so. Recognising this, the college has done much to try to raise these students' achievement. This is rightly the main focus of its current work. Senior managers know that there is underachievement, most notably in English and technology, and have taken steps to improve teaching and learning in these areas.

The college has an unusually open way of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching that involves staff at all levels, governors and students. The college knows that the current satisfactory teaching needs to become more varied and lively. Teaching in the sixth form is good and this expertise is beginning to be used to improve teaching at other levels. The college is slowly benefiting from its designation as a specialist college for mathematics and computing, leading to stronger links with the local community. Access to improved resources is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Staff know the students very well and give them a good level of individual attention. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities or other vulnerabilities are supported well. All students are set individual targets although these lack precision in some areas. The personal development of students is given a high priority. The wide range of extra activities on offer is popular with students. A greater variety of vocational courses is now available but more are needed to meet the needs of those students who prefer such courses.

Senior management and leadership are strong and the college has good capacity to improve. Resources are used well and the college provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is well established and the college rightly judges it to be effective. Good guidance and induction procedures, coupled with careful target setting and regular feedback on progress are important factors in its success. Students praise the good relationships they have with staff and the helpful support they receive. One student said, "the college has done wonders with me". Self-evaluation is accurate and the college is aware of where further improvements can be made. Standards and achievement are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise the achievement, particularly of boys, in Years 10 and 11
- further improve the quality of teaching by harnessing and spreading the skills of the best teachers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Looked after children, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are most vulnerable, achieve well.

External examinations demonstrate that students make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 9 and standards are in line with national averages. Overall, there is a trend of gradual improvement and students are making better progress from Year 9 to Year 10 than they have done in the recent past, due to new policies and procedures.

Previously the results and progress for some groups of students at GCSE were not good enough. The senior management team knows this and has taken effective action that has started to improve results for all students. A significant number of students take 10 full GCSEs, representing a higher number than the national picture.

The college has correctly identified the relative performance of different groups of its students; this analysis indicates the underachievement of lower-to-middle ability white British boys. In 2005 students who were likely to underachieve were accurately identified by the college but the well considered strategies employed to support them did not make a significant difference to their GCSE performance. The college has now undertaken further ways to address underachievement. These made little impression on the 2005 GCSE results; however the current standard of work shows improvement and is satisfactory. This supports the college's confidence that results will be better in 2006.

In the sixth form the retention and overall pass rates are good. Students achieve well in most subjects, often reaching grades better than those predicted by their previous results. The high A and B pass rates help to ensure that virtually all students are able to go to their first choice university. For some individuals achievements have been outstanding with one student awarded five grades A at A-level.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development of students is good. They develop good social awareness and understanding of moral issues. The college has emphasised positive attitudes and behaviour, which has helped students develop responsibility for themselves, others and their environment. There are good arrangements, which ensure the college is calm and students feel safe and respected; most parents share this view. Inspectors were struck by the great enthusiasm displayed by students when they talked proudly about their college. A Year 9 student said that the college was an enjoyable place to learn.

Attendance, punctuality and behaviour have all improved and are at least satisfactory. When students are not in lessons the college has good systems for monitoring their movements. Fixed term exclusions continue to be above average.

Drinking water is available to students and a few years ago, a healthy eating initiative was introduced, which is positively affecting students' eating habits. The physical education department makes a valuable contribution to students' health, with an extensive and carefully monitored programme of extra-curricular activities, which involves about one third of all students.

Students make a good contribution to the college community and to local charities. The college contributes well to the local community by ensuring that by the time students leave they are well prepared for the world of work and have a realistic understanding of what is available in further education and training.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college has rightly recognised that the quality of teaching and learning is good in the sixth form and satisfactory in Years 7-11.

Past problems in recruiting staff led to significant pockets of unsatisfactory teaching. The college has been successful in tackling unsatisfactory teaching and is rightly turning its attention to further improvement by making lessons livelier and by helping students to learn more easily, for example by the effective use of interactive whiteboards. The use of information technology is increasing, which enables students to learn independently. This was seen in a lesson in which Year 10 students were studying the new applied GCSE IT course.

Much of the best teaching is in the sixth form and students comment that their lessons are interesting and dynamic. Students of all ages say that teachers willingly help them when asked. The college is beginning to identify the strengths of individual teachers and deploy them more effectively across the college. Some class sizes in the main college are rather large, which along with some small rooms means that the movement of staff to check students' work is restricted.

Teachers' marking and assessments systems are mostly effective but do not focus sufficiently on raising achievement through the identification of sharper improvement points to be shared with students. In many cases students do not know what to aim for or how to improve their work, and underachieve as a consequence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college offers a satisfactory but improving curriculum. In recent years, the GCSE curriculum has not been sufficiently well matched to students' needs and this has been one factor in recent weaker GCSE results. Changes made in September 2004 were

imaginative, well researched and with a clear analysis of the needs of students. The results of an initial evaluation are positive, although the college will have to wait until summer 2006 to assess fully the outcomes. The college is well aware of what needs to be done next. It knows which areas of the curriculum do not fully meet statutory requirements and has plans to put this right. The leadership and management of this area are purposeful and energetic; there is good capacity for improvement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Most students interviewed during the inspection explained what their targets are and how they had received clear guidance on what they had to do to achieve them. Students are given a strong voice through the influential students' council. Students act as peer mentors; both learners and mentors are very positive about this process. The students value these responsibilities and younger ones aspire to become mentors. Students very much appreciate the rewards system, especially the positive postcards that are sent home to parents.

Students speak highly of the Learning for Living programme, which covers sex and drugs education, and issues such as bullying. This timetabled course is planned and delivered well. Much of the curriculum in personal, social and health education and citizenship is taught through all subjects. The consistency of this process is not yet evident throughout all levels of the college and many students were not aware that these aspects were being taught to them. All students undertake GCSE humanities and this course is having a positive impact on these areas. Guidance on careers is well covered through the college's partnership with the Connexions service.

The support provided by the teaching assistants, combined with the well-organised and attentive special educational needs department, are strengths of the care students receive. Arrangements for safeguarding all students are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The headteacher has been in post for two years. Ably supported by a relatively new senior leadership team, he is giving very good, determined leadership. For example, behaviour is now good and many staff and parents comment that it is better than it was a few years ago. The curriculum has been developed to match students' interests and aspirations. Where subjects were not well led, changes have been made and middle management is now stronger. Careful monitoring means that the headteacher is quite clear about what needs to be done. The capacity of the leadership and management team to improve the standards and achievements of students is good.

The supportive and hard working governors bring a valuable wealth of experience to their work. Many governors visit the college and observe lessons, so they know what is going on. They are diligent about students' health and safety. The last two years

have been difficult for staffing, especially in English. The headteacher and governors have persevered to achieve an almost full complement of qualified teachers. After one year in post, the new head of English has raised standards at the end of Year 9; evidence suggests they are set to improve at GCSE in 2006.

The college's self-evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is realistic and honest. The senior leadership team's evaluation that teaching is satisfactory, but could be better, is accurate. The headteacher appreciates that teaching must be more dynamic to raise standards. Parents and students are regularly asked to contribute their views and the college listens and takes action. Students interview teacher applicants and observe lessons.

The college's finances are tightly controlled and audit reports confirm they are very well managed. Best value for purchases is sought imaginatively and tightly controlled.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3	2
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	3	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?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

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	1	
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	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
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	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
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

Felpham Community College Student Council Felpham Bognor Regis West Sussex PO22 8EL

Thursday, 15th September 2005

Dear Students,

My colleagues and I greatly enjoyed inspecting your school last week. Many of you told us how the good relationships between you and the staff meant that you really enjoyed school and felt safe there. A large number of your parents/carers agree with you.

We encourage you to read the report but this letter is to let you know what your school does well and how you can help your school to be even better than it is.

The main strengths of your college are that students:

who have learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well

who are vulnerable or going through a 'rough patch' in their life are well cared for and supported by the school

take responsibility and make an active contribution to their community, for example through the school council

work hard and make good progress in the sixth form

take part in a number and range of activities available.

To make your college even better we have asked the staff to improve two main things:

raise the achievement, particularly of boys, in Years 10 and 11. You can help staff improve this for all students by asking for more help and clearer guidance from the teacher when you do not know what you need to do to improve your work

further improve the quality of teaching by harnessing and spreading the skills of the best teachers. Perhaps you could help teachers make lessons more interesting?

The senior teachers and the governors know what needs to be done to improve the college and have got plans to do it. We believe that if you help the teachers to put these plans and our recommendations for improvement in place, standards will go up.

Good luck with your studies

Steffi Penny HMI (Lead Inspector)