



# Southfields Community College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 101063  
**Local Authority** Wandsworth  
**Inspection number** 285963  
**Inspection date** 23 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jacqueline White HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	333 Merton Road
<b>School category</b>	Foundation		Wandsworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19		London SW18 5JU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8875 2600
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	1269	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8874 9949
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	206		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Mary Walker
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jacqueline Valin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2001		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection date</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–19	23 January 2007	285963

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector in a one day visit.

## **Description of the school**

Southfields Community College is bigger than average with significantly more boys than girls and a sixth form. The college offers extended provision and has achieved specialist status in sports. In addition, it is an accredited provider for teacher training.

Many of the students come from home circumstances that, in economic terms, can be described as disadvantaged. The school is set within an area where there is a high level of deprivation compared to the national context. The number of students taking up free school meals is well above average. Other schools in the locality operate a policy of selection.

The majority of students are from a range of minority ethnic groups and speak more than seventy different languages. Over a third of students are from homes where English is not the first language. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is very high, making up nearly two-thirds of the college.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Since its last inspection in 2001, when it was judged to be good, the college has continued to improve and provides an outstanding education for its students. Parents rightly feel that it gives their child every chance of succeeding in life.

The college is a vibrant and purposeful place where everyone's right to learn is respected and everyone matters. Staff and governors are unified in their commitment to excellence and dedication to the care of every child.

Student attitudes are very positive as demonstrated by their good attendance. They enjoy and appreciate the rich range of opportunities available to them. Outstanding personal development helps them to mature as thoughtful citizens with a sense of responsibility for the local and wider community. The college council is an impressive body that takes an active part in supporting school improvement. In addition, students offer support to younger students in their learning.

The excellent curriculum, offers a creative range of support and challenge in Key Stage 3, a wide choice of courses in Key Stage 4 and increasing flexibility in the sixth form. Extended provision including homework clubs, booster classes and a range of services focused on ensuring the well-being of students and the involvement of their families means that learning is both prioritised and maximised. Students are engaged by the breadth of provision and inspired to explore and develop their potential. The college's staunch commitment to fulfilling and extending students' aptitudes drives its ambition to personalise learning further.

Staff expect students to succeed. Strong relationships support a culture of self-belief. This positive ethos combined with consistently good and often outstanding teaching ensures most students make excellent progress. There is constant endeavour to raise standards. The majority of students enter the college with exceptionally low standards. In particular, many require intensive intervention to acquire language skills rapidly and progress as effective, independent learners. The college rightly recognises this as a key challenge and a priority for continuing development. By the end of Year 11 students reach standards that are broadly average.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders set a clear direction for the college, have the highest expectations and evaluate performance rigorously. So much so, in some instances, the effectiveness of the college has been underestimated. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has been instrumental in maintaining the improvement of the college to its present very high standard. Her passion and no-nonsense attitude to getting on with the business of making things better ensures there is no room for complacency. She is well supported by a highly skilled and efficient senior leadership team. The consistency of subject and pastoral leaders adds powerfully to the excellent capacity to improve.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is excellent. The first-rate care and guidance provided for students supports learning and gives every individual the opportunity of realising their potential. Sixth formers are excellent role models for other students and make an important contribution to the 'I can do' attitude that pervades the college. Students build on their achievements in Key Stage 4 fruitfully. Teaching is consistently good and leads to most students making good progress and some making excellent progress. Whilst standards remain below national averages they are improving steadily. The curriculum is being developed rapidly and the choice of courses available has been appropriately extended. The leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. Systems for monitoring are well used to identify underachievement and set individual targets. The director of learning post-16 has a clear vision for developing the sixth form and is implementing this successfully. As a result of this recruitment and retention have improved significantly.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Increase the independence of learners by:

- accelerating the development of their language and thinking skills, particularly in Key Stage 3
- personalising their learning even further.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' achievement overall is outstanding in relation to their starting points because they receive strong support from staff and their needs are met by a creative and skilfully tailored curriculum. Systems for tracking students' progress are exemplary and staff are quick to spot any underachievement and take appropriate action.

The college sets challenging targets that are met. There is a trend of improvement in standards in each key stage. Although standards at the end of Year 9 remain below national levels they have improved significantly. In Years 7-9 emphasis is given to strengthening basic skills so that students make excellent progress in Years 10 and 11. Results in 2006 indicate that 55% of students achieved five higher GCSE passes. This is a huge improvement on 2005 results and shows that standards at the end of Year 11 are now close to the national average. Given students' exceptionally low attainment on entry to the college, this is a remarkable achievement. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well as do those whose home language is not English.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding features of the college. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is excellent. Students speak convincingly of the ways in which they support each other. This commitment is evident in good behaviour and positive relationships. Students value the time teachers spend with them both in and outside of lessons. They appreciate the opportunities available to them and take their personal responsibility for self-improvement seriously.

Students are well aware of the issues of safety and healthy lifestyles. For example, they are making an influential contribution to improving safety in the wider community by standing against the stereotypes connected with gang culture. They are also actively involved in promoting healthy eating. The college council is just one means by which students' views are sought. Students play a significant part in the ongoing development of the college. They feel valued and have a powerful sense of belonging because they are treated as individuals with opinions that matter.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Overall, teaching and learning are outstanding. The committed and enthusiastic staff capture students' interest through effective classroom discipline, stimulating work and a relentless adherence to high expectations. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and ask well-chosen questions to test and deepen students' understanding. In the most successful lessons, teachers have a detailed understanding of the differing needs of each student and provide challenges that accelerate progress and encourage independence. Students' learning is closely monitored and carefully evaluated. Targets for improvement are regularly reviewed and swiftly revised where necessary. Students have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Students with additional learning needs receive effective, tailored support based on sound initial diagnosis.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Curriculum provision is outstanding in its breadth and quality. Specialist status as a sports college has been a key feature of effective curriculum development. The college offers a very good range of academic and vocational courses but wishes to extend

students' choice further and, quite appropriately, is aspiring to achieve a second vocational specialism.

The exceptional variety of activities both in and out of school enriches students' experience further. Participation rates are high with many students benefiting from trips, residential visits abroad and participation in sport. Students with special gifts or talents have many opportunities to develop outside the formal curriculum. Those who most need to boost their basic skills receive effective one-to-one support. There is very good provision for careers education, work related learning and community service. As a result, students' self-confidence, enterprise and financial skills are developing well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. This is a highly inclusive community where every student is helped as much as possible. All aspects of child protection and health and safety procedures are secure. Parental surveys indicate a very high level of satisfaction and extremely positive support for the school. Parents appreciate their regular involvement in discussion of their child's progress. They value the approachability of staff and applaud their hard work and commitment. They are especially appreciative of the quality and speed of communication through text messaging, phone calls and newsletters. One parent wrote, 'This school has made a massive improvement, I can see that through my child's work and levels.' Another commented, 'My daughter has made fantastic progress'. Inspectors agree that students thrive in a caring and supportive environment.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 1**

**Grade for sixth form: 1**

The excellent leadership demonstrated by the headteacher permeates the development of leadership at every level. Strong teamwork among the staff and governors has meant the momentum of improvement has continued apace. Together, they ensure there is a clear, shared vision placing the needs of students at the heart of the day to day life of the school. As a result, most students, whatever their background, achieve exceptionally well.

Self-evaluation is well founded and used effectively to raise students' achievement. An improvement cycle of planning, doing and reviewing is established and highly effective. The professional development of all staff is given a high priority. Leadership and learning are bound together in the sense that the adults in the college community are regarded as learners and every learner, including students, is expected to develop their capacity for leadership.

Governors are involved in the life of the school and its strategic direction. They are well informed about development plans and effective in supporting and challenging those charged with responsibility for implementation. The school successfully tackled the issues identified in its previous inspection and then extended its expectations. It has excellent capacity to continue improving.



**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](http://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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	1
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	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
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	1	

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

### Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	1
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	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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**

As you know, your school was recently inspected and this letter is to inform you about the outcomes of the inspection. However, we would first like to thank those of you we met and spoke to during the visit. We appreciated your openness and cooperation and were impressed by the thoughtful and perceptive way you talked about your school.

Yours is an outstanding school. There are many reasons for this, but the main ones are the leadership and management provided by the governors, headteacher, senior team, curriculum and year leaders. They and all the staff are committed to ensuring that you have every opportunity to succeed. The care, guidance and support staff provide for you are excellent. We all also think the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities available to you meet your needs very well. You contribute powerfully to the success of your school through your positive attitudes and commitment to developing respectful, supportive relationships. Staff expect you to work hard and most of you strive to give of your best at all times. The consistently good and often outstanding teaching helps you to learn well. Consequently, your performance in test and examination results is improving strongly. In addition, and every bit as important, you take responsibility for helping to develop your school as a place where everyone feels safe and proud to belong.

We feel that you are ready to become more independent in your learning. We want you to work with the staff to develop the skills that will help you to achieve this. Staff will also keep thinking about how they can personalise your learning experiences to maximise your potential.

We are confident that your school will continue to improve. You have an important role to play in this and we wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline WhiteHer Majesty's Inspector