



Impington Village College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110861
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 288798
Inspection date 5 October 2006
Reporting inspector Alan Alder HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	New Road
School category	Community		Impington, Impington
Age range of pupils	11–19		Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB4 9LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223 200400
Number on roll (school)	1392	Fax number	01223 200419
Number on roll (6th form)	284		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Alan Rodger
		Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Morton
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2002		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
11–19	5 October 2006	288798

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Impington Village College is a popular school for all abilities located in a village to the north of Cambridge. It is a specialist college for languages and has provision for children with physical and learning disabilities. Nearly one in eight students speak English as an additional language. A similar proportion has learning difficulties or disabilities. The sixth form offers the International Baccalaureate as well as more traditional courses. The college takes in students from a wide area of East Anglia as well as from more than 35 countries. The school has been led since September by an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with many features which are outstanding. There is a very strong ethos of helping students, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, to develop both academically and personally. The acting headteacher has very high expectations of what should be achieved and very good systems are in place for ensuring that these expectations are realised. As a result the ethos permeates the school, making it an inspiring place to be. Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They show greater than average openness, confidence and maturity. The outstanding care students receive as well as the good teaching and the outstanding curriculum play an important role in students' personal development. They benefit from the school's high expectations of them, for example by providing many opportunities for students to take responsibility through a very vibrant and strong school council. Students' contribution to the community is outstanding. There are excellent opportunities to work with the community: local, national and international. The Global Citizenship programme helps students to understand the rich diversity of cultural values and beliefs throughout the world. The curriculum also contributes extremely well to students' very evident enjoyment of school. There are opportunities to develop new interests through the extensive range of school clubs, as well as many opportunities to take part in international travel. The range of courses offered is very good. For older students, including the sixth form, there is good provision for vocational education and work-related learning, as well as more traditional courses. There is a rich range of foreign languages taken by students, including early morning lessons in Latin. Leadership and management are outstanding and have strong systems in place to maintain and improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the last two years the school has seen a relatively high proportion of experienced staff leave, largely for promotion. Good induction, monitoring of lessons and support for new teachers are helping to maintain standards. Teaching is of a good quality so students' achievement is good and the standards reached are above average. In the sixth form, achievement is outstanding, helped by a stimulating curriculum. Some inconsistencies remain in teaching, for example in the use of assessment data, marking and questioning. This means that students are not always sufficiently aware of how they are doing and how to improve their work. In lessons teachers are not always aware of whether the work is pitched at the right level and to what extent students are finding it too easy or difficult. The school's own monitoring confirms this. Teaching assistants provide good support for students who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The care, guidance and support offered are outstanding, and central to the work of the school. Students report that instances of unsatisfactory behaviour and bullying are dealt with quickly. As one student put it, if bullying takes place, 'there are so many things you can do about it, so many people you can talk to. It's dealt with before you know it.' Students develop a strong commitment to racial equality, partly because of the rich range of ethnic backgrounds of the students in the sixth form and the diversity of languages spoken. The school is developing well. Its leaders' evaluation of its work is accurate and results in well judged actions being taken to bring about further improvement.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The sixth form is highly effective. Students' achievement is excellent and they reach standards which are very high. Teaching is outstanding and the support provided by tutors is strong and effective. A high proportion of students take the International Baccalaureate and these students make outstanding progress. Those taking A-level courses make satisfactory progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment data to ensure that students of all abilities receive work which is well matched to their capabilities. - Ensure greater consistency in the marking of work so students know what to do to improve. - Ensure greater consistency in the use of questioning during lessons to assess students' understanding so the teaching can be adjusted accordingly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The results from the 2005 Year 9 national tests and GCSE examinations showed that standards are well above national averages. When students enter the school in Year 7 their standards are in line with those found nationally, so the progress they make is good. The provisional 2006 results show standards which, though down on 2005, are still above average. The progress made, again while not as strong as in 2005, remains good, though the challenging targets set by the governing body were not achieved. All groups of students make good progress compared to that made nationally, including those students who have learning difficulties or disabilities. In modern foreign languages, standards in 2005 were below the national average, partly a result of the school entering all its students for an examination. Language learning is now benefiting from the school's policy of teaching French to primary school pupils from Year 3. This has raised standards. The current Year 11 students were the first to benefit and about one quarter of them took their GCSE a year early, with virtually all obtaining a high grade pass. In the sixth form the great majority of students follow the International Baccalaureate and standards are very high, being well above results internationally. The 2005 results show that standards of the much smaller number of A-level students are in line with national averages, as is the progress they make. More than one third of sixth form students are not being taught in their first language (for some English is their third language) making the progress they make still more impressive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students demonstrate outstanding personal development. There are many opportunities for them to take responsibility, through the school council for example. This has been instrumental in taking decisions about changes to the school uniform, and in surveying local caterers for the school to use in order to improve the provision of healthy food. Behaviour is nearly always at least good in lessons and relationships throughout the school are excellent. As a result, students show great respect for adults in school, visitors and one another. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Students have excellent opportunities to reflect on issues such as achievement and the importance of trying hard with God's help. They clearly know the difference between right and wrong, and they say that bullying and unacceptable behaviour are rare. Engagement with organisations such as Amnesty International and support for projects in Tanzania and Swaziland helps their understanding of the world. Students are very proud of and enjoy their school exceptionally well. This is reflected in their good attendance. Students are very safety conscious and feel they can approach any adult if they have concerns. They stay fit by participating in the wide variety of sporting and physical activities that the school offers, and they are very conscious of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. The students' considerable contribution to the school and wider community is also outstanding. They take full advantage of the many opportunities to take responsibility within the school and local community through various fund raising events and participation in Active Citizenship programmes. Students are well prepared for their future working lives through their good progress in literacy and numeracy and a very good programme of work-related learning. Students develop at school into confident well rounded young people.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are mostly planned around clear objectives for learning. Students are well motivated and focus on their learning because teachers maintain excellent relationships with them. Students learn new skills quickly. This is because teachers know their subjects well and often challenge students' learning through thoughtful and probing questioning. However, this is not yet consistent enough. Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to ensure that students with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included in lessons. Most lessons include a good variety of activities and often proceed at a brisk pace. This maintains the students' interest and concentration. Teachers make increasing use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons to support learning. Assessment is satisfactory, but the outcomes are not

always used well enough in teaching to guide planning or cater for the wide range of students' abilities in lessons. Most marking of students' work is up to date and often includes comments to help move learning forward, but this is not a consistent practice. Sometimes work is not marked, so that students do not know how well they are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for students to learn and make progress, giving suitable emphasis to developing literacy and numeracy across subjects. Students benefit from an extended range of courses such as the International Baccalaureate and vocational GCSEs. Work-related learning and vocational education are greatly enhanced by the close partnership with local colleges, providing all students with a variety of options for accreditation. The ASDAN and Duke of Edinburgh awards provide students with very good opportunities to prepare for life beyond school. An outstanding feature of the school's work is the well attended variety of activities, during and after school hours. There are also many trips to places of interest, including foreign countries such as Japan and Russia, and a diverse range of visitors, such as dancers in residence and performing artists in residence, to broaden the students' experiences. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are not only taught but permeate the life of the school. Drugs and sex education programmes are well thought out, and strong links with the community police officer and school nurse effectively increase students' awareness of these issues. Very good provision for students with learning difficulties or disabilities ensures their access to learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. There are strong systems in place to safeguard the interests and welfare of students, through for example thorough vetting procedures, including criminal record checks, before staff are appointed. There are very good arrangements for child protection, and risk assessments are fully in place. Systems for checking periodically how well students are doing are also very well developed, and used effectively by senior and middle managers to identify priorities for development in the school. Very good support is provided for students with learning difficulties or disabilities and they are well integrated into school life. This is through the work of skilled support staff and the involvement of therapists.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The acting headteacher provides strong leadership and communicates well a robust determination that young people receive the best education possible. She has established very high expectations of what students can achieve, in their personal development as well as in their academic progress. The governing body is an important advocate of high standards and supports and challenges the school well. Teachers with responsibilities within the school show a high commitment to further improvements. There is a strong feeling of accountability helped by the school's performance management system. The school has new processes for evaluating its work. These include searching and self-critical analyses of the performance of subject departments, carried out by each head of department and scrutinised by the line manager. These are accurate and perceptive and inform the plans for the department's development as well as the developments needed in the school as a whole. The quality of the process is playing a very significant role in generating improvement. There is a very clear understanding of strengths and where the school can improve. The strategies for improvement are clear and well judged. They are also effective, as shown by the successful action taken to raise students' attendance to well above the national average. The school's capacity for improvement is outstanding, and given its performance, achieved against a relatively recent period of severe budgetary constraint, value for money is outstanding.

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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	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	1
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?	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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	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	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	1
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

6 October 2006 Dear Students Impington Village College, New Road, Impington, Cambridge. CB24 9LX Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful during our inspection. We met and spoke to quite a number of you when we visited, and your comments were very useful. The first thing we noticed was how easy it is to speak to you. You are very open, confident and articulate. The relationships you have with each other and with your teachers are very good. Your school is very well led and managed and there is a very strong drive from its leaders for it to improve further. One of the reasons it is so good already, and has an outstanding sixth form, is that there is a very clear and strong commitment to helping all of you to develop both personally and academically. This has resulted in, for example, an outstanding curriculum with a very impressive range of extra-curricular provision, including many opportunities for you to be involved in social projects, some of which are overseas. The multi-ethnic make up of your school, particularly in the sixth form, is a real strength. You have a good understanding and appreciation of a range of cultures. Your school works hard to make sure that you are looked after and that you make the progress you should. Teaching is of a good quality. Your school's commitment to further improvement is impressive, as are the efforts made to find out what is working well, and what needs further development. Our judgement is that your school should concentrate on improving its use of the data it has about your abilities so that work is well matched to everyone's capabilities; ensuring greater consistency in the marking of work so that you have a clear idea of how to improve; using questions more in class to find out how much you are understanding. Best wishes for your future Alan Alder HMI