



# The Community College Chulmleigh

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 113509  
**Local Authority** Devon  
**Inspection number** 289658  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Pauline Robins HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Chulmleigh
<b>School category</b>	Community		Chulmleigh
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		EX18 7AA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01769 580215
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	604	<b>Fax number</b>	01769 581119
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Colin Piper
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 October 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 11–16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24–25 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289658
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

The Community College is a smaller-than-average, oversubscribed rural school. It has a large, dispersed and somewhat isolated catchment area covering over 200 square miles. Most of the college is housed in 'temporary' accommodation. The vast majority of the students are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is below that seen nationally and the number of students with a statement of special educational need is slightly below the national figure. The college was designated as a Business and Enterprise Specialist School in September 2003. The headteacher has been in post since September 2004.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Chulmleigh is a satisfactory and improving school with much that is good and some outstanding features. The headteacher has brought stability and purpose to the college following a period of instability at senior management level. Together with his leadership team and governors, he knows the college well but has been somewhat over-optimistic when recording the college's self-evaluation. However, all staff, governors and students are involved in self-evaluation and the construction of the college improvement plan, which is appropriately focused. The quality of leadership and management at head of department and head of house level is inconsistent and these staff members do not always understand their role in raising standards.

The majority of students make satisfactory progress and those with learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress. However, results by the end of Year 11, although good, could be better were students' rate of progress to be improved. This is a reflection of the teaching, which is satisfactory overall but with some exemplary practice which is not yet shared sufficiently between colleagues across the college. The college has experienced some difficulties in recruiting and retaining teaching staff in this somewhat rurally isolated area and this has also had a detrimental effect on the consistency and quality of teaching. Teaching is improving, but teachers are not consistently using assessment data to guide their planning and set targets so that students know precisely what they need to do to improve.

The college also has great strengths. Relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are very positive. As a result, students enjoy coming to college, have good attitudes to their work and attend well. Students are encouraged to become involved in the running of their college and treat it with great respect. The work of the college in promoting healthy lifestyles and the students' involvement, not just with the college but also in the wider community, are exemplary.

The college's designation as a specialist enterprise and business school has had a positive effect on students' motivation, the provision of resources, the development of enterprise and workplace skills, and the contribution the college makes to other schools and to the local community. Departments have undertaken initiatives to extend students' learning. For example, students studying information and communication technology (ICT) visited a radio station as a prelude to developing their own on-line radio station. The college provides technical support and training for local primary and secondary schools. The provision of extra staff and resources has had a positive effect, for example, on raising boys' motivation and achievement, whilst class sizes have been reduced. The development of on-line learning facilities is widening learning opportunities, both for students in college and for people in the community.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and of learning.
- Rigorously and consistently apply the monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that judgements about the performance of the college are accurate.

- Share good practice and use appropriate professional development to improve the quality of middle leadership.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The school's GCSE results for five or more A\* to C grades have varied in recent years and slipped over time in comparison with the rising trend nationally. When English and mathematics are included in the picture, the comparison with national performance is even less favourable. Given students' at least average attainment on entry, students in 2005 and 2006 made satisfactory progress overall. Among core subjects, the value added by the college was substantially accounted for by progress in science. In 2005 and 2006, Year 11 students obtained inconsistent results across subjects, so that students who did well in science, for example, performed significantly less well in other subjects. The school did not meet its target for A\* to C grades in 2006.

Good progress is made by students with statements of special educational needs and those recognised by the college as having learning difficulties. This is because their needs are fully understood and acted upon with carefully constructed programmes of work to suit each student. Their progress is tracked regularly and they know the steps to follow to improve further.

For the current year group taking GCSE examinations in June 2007, standards are above average. They are making satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities and the context of the school. The school is taking steps to raise standards and achievement further, but rigorous approaches are required to ensure that inconsistencies in subject performance and teaching quality are ironed out. The assessment for learning initiative shows much promise and, when understood and implemented consistently across the college, has the potential to raise standards and achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development and well-being are good. Students willingly respond to the many opportunities there are to accept responsibility in the college, such as being peer mentors and prefects. The house system also contributes to students' understanding of working as part of a group and contributing towards a common goal. The school council is an effective body and has instigated many changes within the college. It has been actively involved in helping the college to become the first school in Devon to gain the Healthy Schools Award. Students enjoy the very good range of extra-curricular activities available to support a healthy lifestyle, which includes unusual activities such as skateboarding and horse riding to ensure all students have an opportunity to participate. Student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Religious studies makes a significant contribution towards students' spiritual development and this is supported by 'Connect Christian' workers who assist in school

and run Christian groups. Students' moral, social and cultural development is supported well in many subjects and through the wide range of trips organised by the school. Students have recently visited schools and colleges in Uganda and Romania. An active fund-raising programme now supports these institutions. Though these visits contribute towards students' multicultural awareness, there is scope for this area to be developed further.

Students enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Behaviour is very good. Students feel that bullying is uncommon, and staff deal effectively and quickly with any reported incidents.

The development of work-place skills is good. The students benefit from the business and enterprise specialism of the college and this makes a significant contribution towards their understanding of the world of work and the training and qualifications they need to achieve future success.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some examples of good and outstanding practice. The college acknowledges that teaching has not yet reached the consistent standard that it aspires to, although it is improving. Resources for ICT are widely available and used appropriately in many lessons. Teaching in many lessons, while satisfactory, contains too few activities to develop students' independent learning, and too much listening to the teacher. Better teaching engages students actively in their learning through lively discussions and tasks which are interesting and devised to meet their needs. They respond well to this good teaching and display attitudes which are mature and reflective.

Despite being hugely rich in data, assessment information is not used consistently by all teachers to guide their teaching or to set targets for improvement. As a result, students do not always know specifically what they should do to improve further. In some departments the students are asked to develop their own criteria for assessing a piece of work. This encourages them to be more analytical and constructively critical of their own work and that of their peers.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students well. Younger students can study two modern foreign languages. Older students can opt for a variety of academic and vocational courses which prepare them well for further academic study and the workplace. All students study religious education, citizenship and ICT, and some older students take these subjects to examination level. The change to a business and enterprise specialist school has had a radical impact. For example, groups visit commercial enterprises and learn business and workplace skills such as accounting.

Curriculum links with other schools are excellent, enabling two-way sharing of facilities and expertise in areas such as enterprise training. There is a good range of after-school clubs, especially in sport and music, and these are very popular with students. The extensive use of computer links allows for learning to take place at home and in the outside community as well as in college.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The level of care, guidance and support students receive is good. The transition of students from primary school is very good and students settle quickly into the college. The college has recently introduced a mixed-age tutoring system to help students to feel part of a family. The monitoring of tutors is insufficiently rigorous, however, to ensure that all staff comply with the school's pastoral support procedures. Child protection procedures are secure, widely understood and regularly reviewed. The school's procedures for ensuring students' health and safety are well managed. Provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is good and they benefit from good links with external agencies. Students who could become disaffected are identified in Year 9 and are offered an alternative curriculum, with additional support, to retain them successfully in education. However, some students who require additional behavioural support are precluded from accessing this by the cost of transport to specialist provision.

There are inconsistencies amongst staff in the use of assessment data. Students are not sufficiently aware of their target grades for external examinations in all subjects. Marking of students' work varies in quality and does not always contain information on how work can be improved. Students are well prepared to make choices about their future, whether staying on in education or entering the world of work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership of the headteacher is good, with a strong commitment to the college and a clear vision for its future. He and the strong senior leadership team recognise the college's strengths and weaknesses. He has the support of students, staff and the community. The college has come through a period of extreme turbulence but is now stable and poised to consolidate recent improvement. As several governors and staff members said, 'The headteacher has kept staff on board and brought them together in the right mood to build for the future.'

The leadership of middle managers is emerging but is not of consistently high enough quality, an issue that is recognised as a development priority by the college and which means leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Middle managers do not all have a secure understanding of their role and this results in inconsistency of practice. Currently the sharing of good practice and peer observations is limited but acknowledged by the middle leaders as a valuable and effective way forward.

Governors are committed to the college and its future development. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development, are very well informed and provide good support to the college. There is increasing rigour in the process by which they hold the college to account and they are instrumental in the college's good capacity to improve.

The college has used available funds to upgrade and refurbish the buildings, where this has been possible. However, most of the college is housed in temporary accommodation which is unfit for purpose and is a barrier to students' learning. During the inspection some rooms were so cold that practical activities in music were delayed and in others the damp conditions prevented the use of computers. The condition of the buildings was an issue at the last inspection.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### 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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	3
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	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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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**

Thank you for the overwhelmingly positive way you welcomed us into your college during the inspection. We would particularly like to thank those students who took the time to talk to us about the work you are doing and what you see as strengths or areas for development.

There are many good things about the college and some things which are outstanding, such as the work you have all been doing on living a healthy lifestyle, including the way you monitor the quality of the college lunches. We were also very impressed with your behaviour and attitudes towards your work. The staff care greatly about your welfare and this is evident from the good relationships you have with the staff and each other. The curriculum is also good and this has a lot to do with Chulmleigh becoming a specialist business and enterprise college.

We recognise that the condition of the buildings is a major concern for you. However, where it has been possible, the college has done the best it can to refurbish and improve existing accommodation.

Currently the college provides a satisfactory education and we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work on three areas for further development. They are very committed to the improvement of the college but they can only achieve this with your cooperation. The three things are:

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching and of learning.
- Rigorously and consistently apply monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure that judgements about the progress of the college are accurate.
- Share good practice among staff and use appropriate professional development to improve the quality of middle leadership.

We wish you every success in the future.