



# Estover Community College

Inspection Report - Amended

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**Unique Reference Number** 113543  
**Local Authority** Plymouth  
**Inspection number** 289669  
**Inspection date** 8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Geoff Hancock

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive	<b>School address</b>	Miller Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Estover
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	10–18		Plymouth PL6 8UN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 207907
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	963	<b>Fax number</b>	01752 206056
<b>Number on roll (6th form)</b>	243		
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Charlie Huitson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Browne
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002		

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<b>Age group</b> 10–18	<b>Inspection date</b> 8 February 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 289669
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Estover Community College is a larger than average mixed comprehensive college. The college is a designated Visual Arts College. Almost all students are from White British backgrounds and live close by. The community has average social and economic circumstances and the proportion of students who are eligible for free college meals is below average. There is very little movement of students to and from other colleges. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Estover Community College is an exciting place to be. It is a good college with some outstanding features. First and foremost, Estover is a college that goes the extra mile to ensure that students are given opportunities to engage in the life of the college; in short, there are no invisible students. This philosophy of care reaches far beyond the walls of the college because Estover is one of a few pioneering 'extended colleges' which is creating a new type of college where families and members of the community can join in and learn. This aspect of their work is exemplary.

Students enter the college with average standards and make good progress so that, by the end of Year 11, standards are above the national average; this represents good achievement overall. In most subjects students achieve well and in a few, such as Art, achievement is exceptional. The college has worked hard to improve those subjects which are not as strong, and recent improvements in subjects such as maths demonstrate the college's capacity to improve. The personal development and well-being of students is good. The college has worked hard to raise attendance; the rate is edging up and it is now satisfactory. Students are well behaved, mature, helpful, enthusiastic and proud of their college. Students are given a clear understanding of right and wrong and encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. The quality of care, guidance and level of support for students is good. The students feel safe in college and whilst there are very occasional incidents of bullying these are dealt with effectively. The view is shared by the vast majority of parents, one of whom told us 'the college deals with situations quickly, efficiently and stem the problem straight away'. Most students understand the importance of leading healthy and active lifestyles. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons students are totally engaged by lessons which are challenging, focused and superbly planned. However, in some lessons the work set is not matched to the needs of all students. Some students mess around in lessons and are occasionally allowed to get away with it because not all teachers consistently apply the behaviour policies. The college has developed a broad and balanced curriculum that enables students of all abilities to study courses which are well suited to their personal needs. The college has been innovative in developing partnerships with other colleges and institutions. This is a particular strength of the college as it uses these partnerships to enrich the opportunities and experiences of the students across the community. The college's Visual Art's specialism have given a drive and direction to the college's planning which has led to improvements in many areas of the college and expanded the nature and variety of the curriculum.

The leadership and management of the college are good and there are many strong departments. The Principal and senior leadership team have a very clear idea of the college's strengths and weaknesses and know what it will take to make Estover into an even better college. The college has come a long way during the last few years; it is popular with parents and has a growing reputation. One of the biggest hurdles to have faced the college has been weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in Maths; this has had quite a negative impact on student progress. However, the

leadership of the college has taken effective action to improve this situation and the provision for maths is satisfactory and rapidly improving.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Students in the sixth form at Estover thrive in a caring yet challenging environment. As with the main college, the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form is good. Students achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. The sixth formers are a credit to the college. They are mature and responsible. Care and guidance are good. One of the most impressive aspects of the sixth form is the way that the college has built bridges into other institutions so that Estover's students have access to an unbelievable range of courses. The sixth form is well led and managed and the growing numbers of students reflect its growing popularity and reputation and higher aspirations amongst the students.

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

- Continue to raise attendance.
- Continue to raise standards in mathematics.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers plan challenging tasks that engage the interest and meet the needs of students of all abilities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

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

Standards are rising throughout the college. In 2006, whilst standards were below average at the end of Year 9, students achieved satisfactorily and exceeded the targets that were set for them. From Years 10 to 11, progress accelerates so that by the end of Year 11, the percentage of students who achieve 5 grades A\* to C is above the national average; this represents good achievement throughout the college. The percentage of students who achieve both English and maths GCSE, whilst higher than the previous year is well below average; however, students currently in Year 11 are on course to raise this figure significantly. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and no groups of students underachieve.

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

### **Grade: 2**

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

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their work in the arts, particularly the visual arts, provides them some excellent opportunities for developing their creativity and their individuality,

and for considering the world beyond themselves. They embrace these opportunities wholeheartedly.

Relationships within the college are good and staff and students treat one another with respect. As a result students behave well in lessons and around the college. Students enjoy the great range of activities the college offers them. Historically, attendance has been below average. The college has worked very hard to improve this; it is nudging up and is now average.

Students make a good contribution to the life of the college and wider community. Years 11s, for example, take their roles as prefects seriously and younger students say that they are helpful and supportive. Years 7s, meanwhile, are fundraising to take children with learning difficulties abroad. Students understand how to keep healthy, and are safety conscious around the college. They feel secure, and confident that any instances of bullying will be tackled firmly by staff. Students' social skills and their ability to work well independently and with others prepare them effectively for the next stage of their education, although their literacy and numeracy skills are only satisfactory at present.

The personal development of the students in the sixth form is good. They enjoy their courses and are well motivated to succeed. Students are very ready to take on responsibility, for example by organising social events for the whole college and refurbishing their common room. Those who act as associate governors show an enthusiastic commitment to the ongoing improvement of the college.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Teaching and learning are good in most departments, and this enables students of all ages to make good progress. Typically lessons are well planned to meet students' learning needs, with the emphasis on pace and challenge, so that students are motivated and learn well. Teachers focus effectively on the areas where students need to improve and explain clearly what they need to do to reach the higher levels. Resources are chosen carefully and well used to interest and stimulate students. Good relationships and high expectations for behaviour mean students feel confident and well supported.

In the few lessons where teaching and learning are less than good, work is not always well planned to match the profile of the group, and misbehaviour sometimes goes unchecked.

Teachers usually make good use of assessment to plan their lessons and organise their groups so that students get work at the right level to help them achieve as well as they can. The quality of assessment and marking is not always consistent, varying in usefulness between departments. This means that students do not always know what they need to do to improve their work.

Teaching and learning are good in the sixth form. Students are given the independence to pursue their own learning and are well supported to do this, and they respond very positively. Teachers inspire and motivate students very effectively, so that students take a genuine pride in what they can achieve. This was illustrated very convincingly by the work in the visual arts department.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Students of all abilities are given a broad and balanced experience from a good curriculum. Most students are able to follow courses which suit their interests and abilities. The visual arts status has had a terrific impact on the curriculum with every student pursuing art through the college. The college is constantly reviewing the curriculum and has correctly identified areas such as increased modern language provision that would provide greater breadth. Students in good numbers enthusiastically take part in the many lunch time and after-college activities provided; many of these such as the 'junk band' are innovative projects that have come out of the work in the visual arts.

There is an outstanding curriculum in the sixth form which provides extensive choice to students through partnerships with other institutions. The range of courses means that virtually every student has access to a course that is best suited to them.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

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

Care, guidance and support for students are good. Pastoral care in particular is outstanding. Students feel safe on the campus and are confident that there is always someone they can go to if they have problems. They find the drop in centre especially welcoming and helpful. Child protection and vetting procedures are robust and this means that vulnerable students are well supported. Liaison with outside agencies is excellent, so that all students and their families can access the individual help that they need. Any instances of bullying are handled effectively.

Academic guidance for students is good. There are effective systems for the assessment, tracking and monitoring of students' progress, and students know their targets for improvement. However, these systems are not always applied consistently by individual teachers. Students feel that they are given good guidance in choosing their options for GCSE and sixth form study. Students with learning difficulties are well supported in class and in their withdrawal groups and they make similar progress to other students.

Care, guidance and support for sixth form students is good. Outstanding pastoral care and good academic guidance provide students with the foundations on which to grow and flourish in their studies. They are very positive about the advice they receive to

plan their future path and the structured programme of support which accompanies this.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

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

The year on year improvements seen at Estover are a testament to good leadership and management. At all levels in the college there is a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to making Estover an even better college. The Principal and senior leadership set the tone; they provide very clear direction and leave no stone unturned in their desire to ensure that students do their best. Students know this, parents know this and as a result standards are rising. In order to get to this position, the leadership has had to take firm action on occasions, not least in tackling relative underperformance in maths. A mixture of support and challenge has been effective in bringing about significant improvements. New curriculum leaders in maths, modern languages and music have had an immediate impact. These departments are now well led. Teaching and learning are carefully checked and in most subjects, curriculum leaders are effectively focussed on raising achievement. The 'extended college' initiative that has enabled Estover to provide extensive activities to the local community and partner colleges is placing the college at the centre of the whole community.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The impact of this can be seen in the sustained improvement in achievement over recent years and the caring and purposeful atmosphere that is generated.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</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>	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
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	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
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**

My colleague and I greatly enjoyed spending time in your college. Thank you all very much for the open and frank way that you spoke to us.

Many of your parents and carers responded to a confidential questionnaire and we also took your views and concerns into account when making our judgements. You told us about the things you like, what you feel the college does well and the improvements that have resulted from the Visual Arts status that your college has. I encourage you to read the report, but this letter is to let you know what your college does well and what would help it to be even better.

We think that Estover is an exciting place to be, it is a good college with some outstanding features. The results that you achieve are above the national average at GCSE; this is a result of hard work from both you and the college's staff. Much is going on at your college and we are glad that so many of you take the opportunity to get so involved. There is a real sense of community in the college and when you get the new building, the one thing that you feel needs improving (the accommodation) will be sorted. You are well cared for and there is a super range of subjects for you to follow. It is important for colleges to work with the local community so that you can gain experiences that will help you after you leave college; this is something that your college does well. We think that the standard of teaching is good although we agree with you that occasionally there is some misbehaviour and not all teachers make their lessons interesting and enjoyable. We would like the college to ensure that you enjoy your lessons and make good progress. The college has worked hard to improve attendance but at the moment some of you are absent too often. This affects how well some of you achieve so we have asked the college to try to raise attendance levels further. You told us how much better you think mathematics is now. Mathematics is a very important subject which helps you get on in life so we have asked the college to do even more to improve mathematics teaching. We think that by doing these things, Estover will become an even better college.

Once again, thank you all very much for talking to us. I wish you every success in the future.