



Tendring Technology College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115348
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290214
Inspection dates 30–31 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Jones

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	College address	Rochford Way
School category	Foundation		Frinton-on-Sea
Age range of pupils	11–19		Essex CO13 0AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01255672116
Number on roll (college)	1747	Fax number	01255850210
Number on roll (6th form)	0	Chair	Mrs Jean Cains
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Principal	Ms Caroline Haynes
Date of previous college inspection	27 January 2003		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–19	30–31 January 2007	290214

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the college

Tendring Technology College is an above average sized mixed comprehensive, based on two sites some five miles apart, for students aged 11-19 years. It serves a socially diverse catchment of rural and urban areas. Many of the pupils live in deprived districts, and the coastal area is a social housing location for London boroughs. The college has few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The ability profile of the pupils on entry is in line with the national average, and is affected by the loss of potential pupils who take up places at local grammar and independent schools. The school has been a technology college since 1996.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the college

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving college. Standards are above average and rising; pupils achieve well and make good progress. A very positive can do ethos, promoted by the college through well structured initiatives in learning and target setting, encourages pupils to achieve well. Pupils' personal development is good; they have good attitudes to learning, enjoy their work and show respect for other members of the college community. There is often a real buzz of excitement about lessons, although there is still a minority of less effective teaching. The college leaders have made good decisions and choices and have moved quickly over the past two years to bring about improvement, although these changes have not yet had time to achieve their full effect.

Pupils enter the college with average standards. Results at Years 9 and 11 in 2005 were about average, but they improved in 2006. Pupils in Key Stage 3 made good progress in mathematics and English and outstanding progress in science. At Year 11 there was a significant improvement in the number of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics, showing good progress in Key Stage 4. Technology college status successfully promotes pupils' achievement, particularly in technology and information and communication technology (ICT).

Teaching and learning are good overall, and there is a significant amount of outstanding teaching. The teachers' very secure knowledge of their subjects and their confident use of a range of teaching strategies help pupils enjoy learning. In most lessons, pupils have clear long and short-term targets, and are very aware of their own progress and aspirations. There are still some lessons in which pupils do not reach their full potential to learn. There is a good and varied curriculum, with a focus on meeting the needs of pupils with different abilities and aptitudes. Good use is made of alternative and vocational courses to meet this need.

The college makes quite plain to pupils what is and is not acceptable behaviour, and pupils are clear about the consequences of their actions. The great majority behave very well in lessons. There is a small amount of poor behaviour but the college has well established and effective procedures to minimise disruption to classes. Improvements in systems for checking up on pupil absence mean that attendance has improved and is now satisfactory.

Valuable steps are being taken to amplify the student voice in the running of the college through, for example, the work of the college council and through pupils taking part in interviews for staff appointments. Not enough parents are currently involved in their children's education through collaboration with the school, although steps are being taken to improve this.

Management is good, and the principal gives outstanding leadership and vision for the future. The new senior staff roles are well designed to improve pastoral care and academic monitoring, and to coordinate the management of this split-site college. A number of new initiatives have been introduced to improve learning and target setting. Middle managers are working hard to embed these initiatives, although they do not

yet have a full impact in all lessons. There are some deficiencies in accommodation which have an impact on social and academic provision. The college provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the sixth form is good and improving. Achievement is successfully monitored by tutors, ensuring that students meet challenging targets. The sixth form curriculum gives students, with a wide range of aptitudes and abilities, the opportunity to continue their studies, and the great majority complete their courses.

Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Planning, subject knowledge and very good relationships support teaching. Outstanding teaching shows passion, commitment and very high levels of challenge which enhance learning.

Personal development is good. Students enjoy college and make a strong contribution to its community and beyond. They appreciate the good care they receive, and the guidance given about further education and employment. Students are articulate and confident and have positive attitudes to learning. The sixth form is a safe, supportive and yet challenging environment in which students flourish and mature as young adults.

The curriculum is good and meets students' needs. The 14-19 curriculum pathways and consortium arrangements are developing well. New vocational courses are being introduced, especially at levels 1 and 2. Students participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including drama, sport and music.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good, enabling students to make good progress and attain above average standards. A review of provision undertaken in June 2006 is now beginning to shape the development of the sixth form, allowing the head of sixth to take a more active role in improving learning. The sixth form gives good value for money.

What the college should do to improve further

- Ensure that the recent initiatives for improving teaching and assessment are fully embedded across the college.
- Engage parents to participate more effectively in the work of the college.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils enter the college with average standards. Data for 2005 show that, at Years 9 and 11, standards were average when compared to national statistics, but analysis of the 2006 results illustrates an improvement in standards to above average. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make good progress in mathematics and English and outstanding progress

in science. Better than average GCSE results in 2006 show that there has been sustained improvement in the number of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics. Progress across Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good. Standards in the sixth form are above average and students make good progress. Good work through the Raising Achievement Transforming Learning project has had a positive impact on improving results across the college. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as gifted and talented pupils, are well supported and make good progress. Increasing sophistication in the use of data enables managers to track pupils' progress and predict likely outcomes. Effective use of external analysis compares results with those in similar schools, highlighting success and identifying weaker points where action is needed. Recent analysis has identified aspects of literacy as a barrier to learning for some pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning, enjoy their work and develop in self-discipline and respect for other members of the college community, with the sixth form and Year 11 showing real maturity of behaviour. Extra-curricular activities enrich pupils' experience, contributing to their enjoyment and achievement of college life, and take up is good. For example, there is a range of creative clubs, sports activities and rehearsals for school productions.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The college very effectively challenges and broadens pupils' view of the world; respect for others, including people from different cultural groups, underpins the college's core values, and pupils are clear about what it means to be a good citizen. They have a good appreciation of the need to look after themselves, and are encouraged to eat healthily by carefully chosen lunch and snack menus. Pupils feel safe because the college is very clear about what is acceptable behaviour and pupils are clear about the consequences of their actions. The great majority of pupils behave very well in lessons but there is a small amount of poor behaviour by a minority of pupils. The college has well established and effective procedures to deal with such incidents. Bullying is taken very seriously. Pupils make a satisfactory and developing contribution to the college community and have the aspirations, skills and motivation to underpin their ambitions.

The college is a Persistent Absence Priority College. This means that it is accountable to the local authority for the progress it is making in improving the attendance of some pupils. Attendance currently is satisfactory, just below the national average and just above the college target.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall. There is a small proportion of teaching which is satisfactory rather than good, but most of it is good, with a significant element of outstanding teaching. In the good lessons, teachers have very secure knowledge of their subject and create a purposeful working atmosphere. Teachers use a good and inventive range of strategies to help pupils learn. Pupils enjoy having clear targets, and are very aware of their own progress. There is a real sense of a joint venture between teacher and pupils in striving to achieve the best outcome. Regular assessment and feedback from teachers have a positive impact on guiding pupils in how to reach their potential.

Pupils are keen learners but, in a minority of lessons, they are held back because there is not enough challenge or interest, and pupils do not always know specifically how to improve towards the next level or grade.

The college is aware that many parents do not always know how best to get involved with the college to support their children's education, and has introduced short after school courses for parents to explain the approach to, for example, learning how to spell or use computers. This work is in its early stages, but has been well received.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good. The recent development of vocational courses shows imaginative planning by the college to match learners' aspirations, interests and capabilities. The college uses pupil and subject data effectively to develop well constructed personalised curriculum plans, responsive to pupils' needs. The reorganisation of planning and coordination between the lower and upper sections of the college has made the curriculum more effective. An improved range of accreditation has enhanced option choices at Years 10 and 11. The Young Enterprise scheme and work within the technology community are well supported by the college's specialist status, and help prepare for pupils' future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, support and guidance are good, and in some respects outstanding. Although the college is very large, individuals matter. The college is committed to ensuring that all pupils get the most out of their education. The high quality relationships between

pupils and staff underpin this commitment. The college provides very effective support for pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties so that they are able to make good progress. Vulnerable pupils are supported well because of the partnership approach that it has developed with specialist agencies. The college strives to be a safe place. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are robust and risk assessments are carefully attended to. Guidance for pupils in meeting their targets at critical points in their college life is good. Arrangements for work-related learning are particularly strong. Links with parents in explaining what the college is trying to do and involving them in their child's education are not strong. The college is already committed to improving this, and has taken steps to involve parents more closely.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good throughout the college. The principal provides outstanding leadership. She has an unambiguous vision for the college: within a framework of care for each individual, to raise pupils' learning and achievement to new, ambitious levels. She and her committed senior team carry the staff with them in their unrelenting determination to do the best for each pupil. A restructuring of senior staff roles has enhanced both pastoral care and academic monitoring, whilst strengthening the overview in this split-site college.

The college's increasingly sophisticated use of fine-tuned assessment data to support its central aim is embraced by staff and has helped to raise pupils' aspirations and achievement. Similarly, staff performance management and professional development are linked with pupils' academic targets. Lesson observation is regular and helpful to teachers, but as yet lacks the consistency and focus that would maximize its effectiveness for improving learning.

The college carefully monitors the impact of its technology college specialist status. A productive association with the school improvement partner has boosted target setting for pupils. Though constrained by its double site, and by shortages of accommodation which severely affect social and academic provision, the college manages its finances well, securing good value for money. Governors give constructively critical support. They are rightly ambitious, as their able and experienced chair of governors comments, "to help make this good college 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>	College 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	2
How well does the college work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the college'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

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
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	2

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	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	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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 to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 college require special measures?	No	
Does this college require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 February 2007

Dear pupils and students

Tendring Technology College, Rochford Way, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 0AZ

Thank you very much for welcoming me and the inspection team into your college, and for being polite and courteous to us. We enjoyed talking to you about the college, and your views have certainly helped us to write our report.

You are attending a good and improving college. You achieve good standards in your classwork and in examinations, and you make good progress. One of the things we noticed about Tendring was that you and your teachers have a very positive approach, and that most of the time you know your targets and how to achieve them. In many of your lessons you get a real "buzz" from learning, and you have some really good teachers who help you to learn quickly and meet your targets.

It was good to see how well you behaved around the college, and showed respect for teachers and other adults who work at the college, and for each other. You told us that you feel safe in school, and that there is always someone to go to if you need help. We know that there are a small number of pupils who do not behave well, but we found that the college has good systems to make sure these people are dealt with quickly, and that the school doesn't tolerate bullying. The school is helping you to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle by providing healthy lunchtime eating options and opportunities for exercise through sports activities.

We found that the college does not yet do enough to involve your parents in your education, and we have asked them to work on this. We know that your college has made helpful changes to the way your learning is organised, and we think your parents need to be more aware of how well you are doing, and how they can help you to achieve your potential.

Once again, thank you for making our two days with you so interesting, and we wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Jones

Lead inspector