

Cleeve School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115722
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	290316
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Limm HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1508
6th form	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Wakeford
Headteacher	Allen McConaghie
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2002
School address	Two Hedges Road Bishops Cleeve Cheltenham GL52 8AE
Telephone number	01242 672546
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Cleeve School is an oversubscribed foundation school with technology and language college status. It is a large school serving a wide area including areas to the north of Cheltenham. Pupils are from mixed socio-economic backgrounds, although about one third come from areas with a below-average proportion of high social class households. It has a low number of students entitled to free school meals. The majority of students are White British and speak English as a first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Cleeve School provides an outstanding education for its pupils. As one parent put it, 'Both of my children have excelled since attending Cleeve, particularly encouraged by the extra-curricular activities such as music and sport supported by the excellent teaching which together have helped to turn out truly rounded and responsible individuals'. The school prides itself on tailoring its provision to the needs of each pupil; this was endorsed by another parent, who said that her son 'has been understood as an individual and this is huge for boosting confidence and self-esteem'. Staff are fully committed to nurturing every pupil and have created a stimulating and friendly community.

Pupils enter the school with average attainment but make exceptionally good progress and attain very high standards in the main school. This is because teaching is outstanding, as is the rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress. There is excellent provision for those who have learning difficulties and disabilities as well as for more able, gifted and talented pupils. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils extremely well and has an expanding vocational programme with exciting plans for the future. Language college status ensures that it has a thriving international dimension which provides excellent opportunities for supporting pupils' spiritual, cultural, moral and social development, and the impact of the technology specialism is reflected in the highly visible use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning. The school constantly seeks to develop pupils as all-round individuals and nothing is taken for granted in addressing issues relating to welfare and well-being. Safeguarding procedures are excellent. Pupils respect and look out for each other both within and outside the school. They feel safe and well cared for, and are very well prepared for the next phase of their education or career. They make significant contributions to the community, especially through musical and sporting activities. Most pupils stay on into the sixth form.

The headteacher and his excellent senior team provide outstanding leadership. They set, monitor and evaluate the direction and priorities for the school in a rigorously self-critical way but thrive on open debate and exchange of ideas. For instance, the new mentor scheme, though unpopular with some parents, is reviewed and monitored regularly and self-critically. Staff and governors work extremely hard to maintain the school philosophy of keeping the individual pupil at the centre of what happens. Governors are continually pressing for improvements and have supported the school expansion programme most effectively.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provides a good and effective education for its students. A large majority transfer from the main school to the sixth form, where standards have improved since 2006 and are now above average. Although this represents good progress for many students and excellent for some, a minority do not achieve as well as they could. This is because not all teachers engage these students effectively in lessons. However, many teachers provide a stimulating and inspirational learning environment where students are challenged and motivated to do their best. Students' personal development is outstanding because they are given chances to take part in a very broad range of enrichment activities that enhance an already outstanding and developing curriculum. Students respond very well to the opportunities they have to take responsibility for the running and management of their school. Students say that they find school enjoyable and rewarding and their attendance is excellent. Leadership and management

are good, with some excellent features. There is a focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and so raising standards further. However, these developments have yet to provide improvements in results for all students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the sixth form further by ensuring that the excellent practice found in many lessons is extended to all of them.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are exceptionally and consistently high, with a pattern of improving results. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards were above average in 2006, but inspection evidence shows that current standards of attainment in Year 11 are exceptionally high. Pupils make outstanding progress throughout the main school from their broadly average starting points. The majority achieve the challenging targets that are set for them. Pupils who completed Key Stage 3 in 2006 made exceptional progress, placing the school in the fourth percentile ranking of all schools and showing a marked improvement in English, mathematics and science from previous years. Thus, achievement in the main school is outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make as much progress as any others and there is no significant underperformance by any groups of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development is outstanding. Spiritual and moral development is exceptionally good, with Year 7 pupils heard discussing challenging concepts like free will or whether God is punitive. Clear guidelines for behaviour mean that pupils respond very well to the school ethos and have an excellent understanding of what is expected of them. Their social and cultural development is very strong. The language college status promotes an understanding of other languages and cultures and the school encourages students to develop as citizens of the world. Parents confirm that the school encourages their children to be mature and independent. The strong physical education provision has resulted in widespread participation in sports and the adoption of healthy lifestyles. Attendance is well above average and students clearly enjoy their lessons. They take pride in their own achievements and generously celebrate those of others. They respond well to many opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility and an excellent consideration for others' welfare. Students have been consulted about issues as diverse as school cleaning, canteen arrangements and the new buildings. Year 10 students learn from very well-prepared work experience. All students benefit from appropriate careers education and develop very good workplace skills. The excellent practices that operate in the main school continue in the sixth form. In many ways, sixth form students are leaders of the school, developing skills and qualities which will benefit them in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning in the main school is outstanding. In the sixth form it is good, with some outstanding features. The senior management team, through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, have worked hard to improve the quality of lessons. This process has been highly effective. A very high proportion of lessons seen were outstanding, epitomised by teachers and pupils taking risks in their thinking and being open to challenge and argument. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons extremely well so that they skilfully encourage pupils to react with others as well as provide opportunities for more independent learning. In this way all groups of pupils make excellent progress. Classroom management and relationships between staff and students are excellent. Teachers increasingly use data to analyse students' needs, strengths and weaknesses. ICT is very well employed to introduce topics and speed the pace of learning. As an example of what was seen during the inspection, in a Year 8 geography lesson on town settlement development, topical film clips were used to generate a high level of interest, which ensured excellent progress in understanding of the topic. Routine assessments are used consistently and effectively across subject departments to share learning targets with students so that they have a clear understanding of their progress and their next steps in learning. In the sixth form some lessons, by being too teacher-directed, failed to engage and challenge all students appropriately.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The school's curriculum and other activities are outstanding. The wide range of courses and programmes available meets the needs, aspirations and interests of students extremely well. The double specialist status of being a language and technology college has improved curriculum provision markedly and added considerably to the breadth of students' learning experiences. The personalised curriculum in Years 10, 11 and the sixth form ensures that students access a wide range of academic and vocational courses that motivate them to learn. The school works closely with external agencies to ensure effective support for pupils with additional learning needs, for example, work with Access groups. The school recently attained the Challenge Award for its excellent provision for gifted and talented pupils. There is close partnership with others to ensure breadth of pathways into further and higher education, training and employment. Gifted and talented programmes are well used to enable early entries at GCSE in English, mathematics, science and French. Using its double specialist status, the school does extensive work with primary and secondary schools, and in the community. The technology college status is also reflected in the widespread use of ICT to deliver the curriculum. A well-organised programme of careers education operates throughout the school. A very strong thread of community involvement runs through the curriculum. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment and out-of-hours learning opportunities, including strongly supported sporting activities, performing arts, speaking competitions and well-regarded school choirs. The recent production of *Our Day Out* enabled pupils of all ages, and staff, to come together to take an active and enjoyable role, thereby raising their self-esteem and broadening their horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Provision for care, guidance and support is outstanding. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are very thorough and the school works exceptionally well with other agencies when pupils require additional support. Pupils feel safe in school knowing that there are various sources of help whenever it is needed. Pupils know how to improve their work and value highly the excellent individual academic guidance they receive. The few students for whom English is an additional language receive excellent support and make excellent progress. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported both in lessons and through Access arrangements, and so make excellent progress. The wide range of excellent measures to help vulnerable students to achieve is exceptionally effective. Pupils are well informed about education and career options and they are informed objectively about alternatives to sixth form education at the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The school is outstandingly well led and managed. The headteacher and his dynamic senior and middle management teams work extremely well together to create an environment in which each individual is valued throughout the school. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and his drive, innovation and vision have led to a school which focuses on meeting the needs of all pupils and celebrates all forms of effort and achievement. The school knows its strengths and priorities for improvement extremely well. The current building programme and plans for a centre for applied learning are clear evidence of excellent improvement planning being put into practice. The rigorous self-evaluation process reaches all levels and engenders a healthy self-criticism and open exchange of ideas for improvement. It accurately assessed its overall effectiveness as outstanding and rightly identified aspects of its good sixth form provision as requiring strengthening, especially for those seeking more appropriate vocational courses. Middle managers are given considerable autonomy to develop their ideas and take risks within an 'Oversight' system of performance review and monitoring that holds them to account most effectively. The lesson observation programme is rigorous and accurate. Systems for tracking and monitoring pupils are regularly reviewed and refinements made to ensure pupils know well how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. There are well-established links with partnership schools, local employers and other agencies to promote pupils' well-rounded education and well-being. Pupils make significant contributions to the running of their school and there are highly effective mechanisms by which the school ensures that pupils are able to have their voices heard. The school is exceptionally well supported and challenged by very experienced governors who embrace their responsibilities willingly and to excellent effect.

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Annex A

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?	1	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	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?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
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

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	1	1
The attendance of learners	1	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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	1	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	2
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	1	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	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	1	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Cleeve School, Bishops Cleeve, Gloucestershire GL52 8AE

We enjoyed visiting your school recently to inspect it. Thank you very much for making us feel welcome and for talking to us openly and frankly.

We think your school is outstanding, with excellent potential to become even better. This is a tribute to the leadership of Mr McConaghie, his senior team, and to the dedication of your teachers. It is also a testament to your own excellent attitudes to learning and willingness to experience new ideas. It is because you work so well together that most of you reach very high standards in your examinations and assessments. Those who do not reach such high standards are equally valued in the school community and everyone has a well-rounded education which helps them develop their confidence and self-esteem. You are given, and you take, a lot of responsibility in your school and the staff are keen for you to contribute even more to how the school is run.

We have asked the school to ensure that all sixth form lessons are as exciting and engaging as the best lessons we saw. You can help by telling your teachers how best they can do this.

I hope you continue to get as much as you can from your time at Cleeve School.

Yours sincerely Peter Limm Her Majesty's Inspector