



Fleetwood Sports College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119771
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291540
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Vincent Ashworth HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Broadway
School category	Community		Fleetwood, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	11–18		FY7 8HE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 876757
Number on roll (school)	1213	Fax number	01253 879387
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Des Lund
		Headteacher	Mr Stephen Roe
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	16–17 October 2006	291540

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Fleetwood Sports College is larger than average in size. Almost all students are White British; many come from areas of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The number of students identified as having learning difficulties is very high. The percentage of pupils joining the college after age 11 is higher than the national figure and particularly so in Years 10 and 11. Overall attendance is lower than in most schools. The college is a specialist sports college and has Investors in People status and Sports Mark.

Provision in the sixth form is currently under review. Following years of declining numbers and low achievement, the college has rightly recognised the mismatch between the sixth form curriculum and the needs and interests of young people in the locality. There are currently no students in Year 12 and there is one student completing GCE A-levels in Year 13. Plans are now in place to re-introduce a new curriculum that is better suited to students' needs and abilities. The college has adopted a collaborative rather than competitive approach and has dropped traditional academic qualifications in preference for vocational courses at Levels 2 and 3.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Overall, the college provides a satisfactory quality of education. This view is consistent with the college's own judgement. For those students who choose to attend regularly, the college provides a good starting point for adult life. The ethos of the college can be summed up in a statement made by a student who said, 'this college is all about achieving your personal best'. This level of optimism and motivation, which inspectors saw in many students, is a credit to the hard work and commitment of staff who have turned the college around. The college has had many ups and downs in recent years which resulted in a significant decline in both standards and morale. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006. His very strong leadership inspires students and staff to give of their best. He is ably supported by a strong team of senior managers who are relentless in their crusade to ensure that students enjoy their education and realise their aspirations. College buildings and learning resources are maintained to a high standard and reflect the sense of pride that staff and students have in their college. The process of self-evaluation is thorough and results in an accurate picture of the school's major strengths and weaknesses. Managers at all levels are clear about where further work needs to be done and appropriate action is being taken to address issues.

The headteacher inherited a legacy of persistent underachievement and poor student behaviour. The new senior management team has been quick to stem the declining trends. Results, for examinations in 2006, show very promising signs of significant improvement.

Young people are very well cared for and the curriculum in Years 7 to 11 is good. Students enter the college at age 11 with standards that are below those found nationally. By the time they leave, levels of attainment are below average, but this represents satisfactory achievement overall. School data also indicate standards are on the rise. However, standards in mathematics are still too low and too many boys leave school with no qualifications in literacy and numeracy. The college has succeeded in reaching most of its specialist college targets. All of the targets for Year 11 students have been achieved. Targets for Year 9 were just missed; this was due to the fact that girls did not achieve as well as they should in information and communications technology (ICT).

The quality of teaching, although satisfactory overall, is not always as good as it could be. In some instances teaching methods are not sufficiently responsive to the wide range of students' individual learning needs. Students make the best progress in lessons where they are kept busy and stimulated. The quality of learning in a significant minority of lessons is spoiled by students' low level disruptive behaviour; in most cases it is boys who misbehave. Students who disregard the college's rules are dealt with effectively and consistently. Patterns of attendance show slow signs of improvement. Unfortunately, the reluctance of a significant minority of students to attend college regularly has become a matter of habit. Links with parents and other support services are very strong; care is excellent for the most vulnerable and disaffected young people.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics across the college.
- Improve boys' achievements, especially in English and mathematics.
- Ensure lesson planning leads to teaching that is more closely suited to students' individual needs and interests.
- Improve the behaviour of a small minority of boys in lessons and around the college.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' overall progress by Year 9 has been slower than expected and their results in national tests are below average. Inspectors noted from the quality of work in students' books and their participation in lessons, that they are now making steady progress by the end of Year 9. In 2005, students' achievements in mathematics were exceptionally low. However, the college has worked hard to improve students' skills in numeracy as well as their levels of confidence. As a result, in 2006 there was a dramatic improvement in students' results in national tests in mathematics. Equally there was an increase in the proportion of students attaining the highest scores. By the end of Year 9, students make good progress in English and their attainment is broadly average.

As a result of a strong curriculum and staff who provide good care, students make satisfactory progress by the time they complete their compulsory education. Students with learning difficulties make the same progress as others. From 2005 to 2006, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above rose from 34% to 42%. Students' achievements in mathematics and English also improved but results are still not as high as they should be. Boys perform particularly badly in mathematics and too many of them leave school without a qualification in literacy or numeracy. The school has recognised that boys need to achieve higher standards and is starting to address this through targeted support. Students achieve good results in sport, design and technology, drama, religious education and combined science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Students who attend regularly enjoy coming to college. Attendance is below average but is on an upward trend. Boys' attendance is better than girls in Years 7 to 9 but not in Years 10 and 11. A great deal of work is being done to improve attendance and recent new appointments are beginning to have a positive impact. The Family Inclusion Support Programme in partnership with the Wyre Housing Association is specifically targeting absenteeism. Behaviour is satisfactory. Around the college, students generally behave well. In some lessons, a small minority of students, mainly boys, are disruptive and inhibit learning. All the exclusions recorded so far this term are for boys. Students' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development is satisfactory. Many students benefit from the good opportunities for them to exercise responsibility, for example, as prefects or members of the college council. There is a very strong focus on encouraging students to adopt healthy lifestyles. Sports college status has enabled the college to provide students with two hours sport each week and there are high rates of participation in the wide range of after college activities. Healthy eating is well embedded in college life through good healthy college meals, healthy eating awareness days and the opportunity for parents to monitor what students are eating through the computerised till system. Students understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. A large number of them take part in sporting activities and choose healthy meals for lunch. Excellent community links enhance students' education, for example, through links with the Rotary Club and local housing associations. Students' low literacy and numeracy skills when they leave do not augur well for their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A revised whole college policy prioritises the provision of effective learning. However, it does not underpin this by setting out the more fundamental elements of successful teaching or provide guidance on how teachers might include these in their planning. In the good lessons seen by inspectors, students gained a real sense of progress and achievement because teachers explained precisely what they were to learn, how this linked to previous and future work and what standards would be reached. Students responded well, particularly when they were actively involved in varied and demanding tasks conducted at a good pace. Not enough lessons reach this standard and some are dull because teachers are not prepared to take risks in planning activities to excite and enthuse students. Consequently, the behaviour of a small minority, particularly boys, sometimes deteriorates.

The monitoring of teaching gives a clear idea of its overall quality and identifies areas for development. It does not ensure that teachers' planning makes enough use of the wealth of available assessment data in meeting the needs of individual students. The setting of homework is inconsistent in its regularity and purpose. Marking is inconsistent in informing students of their current level and how they might improve in order to reach their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. In Year 7, an alternative 'pathway' provides lower attaining students with more support for language development and the opportunity to take a project-based humanities course. Single gender grouping in Year 9 English has allowed girls to become more confident in discussion and expressing opinions. There is a wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities. 'There are so many it's hard to fit them

all in,' was the view of one Year 11 student. In Key Stage 4, vocational education is expanding, with courses well matched to the local economy. In conjunction with a good programme for work experience and for developing work related skills, students' career aspirations are widening and their employability improving. The impact of specialist status is emerging through more use of ICT and the embedding of sports and health related themes across curriculum areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring college where students of all abilities and backgrounds are given excellent personal support. Links with outside agencies provide very strong home/college support for students, particularly students with social and emotional problems or who have learning and/or physical difficulties. Highly effective support is provided by pastoral managers and directors of learning. They know their students well and are focused on raising their achievement and improving self-esteem. Students feel safe; any bullying that occurs is robustly challenged and student mentors provide confidence and reassurance. Risk assessments and child protection procedures are secure. The Fixed Term Exclusion Centre offers good support in keeping students in college who might otherwise have been excluded. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Students know their target grades, but marking and assessment practice to show them where they are at and what they have to do to achieve a higher grade or level, is inconsistent across subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have galvanised teachers into working corporately, cohesively and consistently to improve all aspects of the college's work. Since the present headteacher took up post, there has been clear analysis of what needs to be done and speedy action taken to secure improvement. However, he has not been in place long enough to demonstrate sustained improvement. Actions taken have raised attendance, enhanced the curriculum and reduced underachievement. Reasonable targets for 2006 were largely met and the college has evidence that progress towards targets for the future is already promising. After a shaky start, actions taken as a result of the college acquiring specialist sports college status are beginning to have an impact in improving students' academic and personal development. Whilst middle management has generally become more effective, especially in working with vulnerable students, there is scope for more rigorous management in some departments. Aspects of assessment, including the use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress, are strengthening. However, managers' evaluations of the work teachers do in planning, and using assessment data, to eradicate underachievement for all students is not fully effective.

The senior leadership team is well supported by the emerging work of the governing body; governors have developed shrewd judgement and not been afraid to take decisive

action when the need arises. Though the college has had its ups and downs since the last inspection, improvement is now gathering speed and the college is currently giving satisfactory value for money. Senior staff know their college well; they have a very accurate picture of where strengths lie and what needs to be tackled. This is stated clearly in the college's plans for improvement. The college has good capacity for further rapid improvement.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
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	4

The quality of provision

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

Fleetwood Sports College

Broadway

Fleetwood

Lancashire

FY7 8HE

18 October 2006

Dear Students

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your college. I thank those of you who helped the inspection by talking to us about your work and your life at college. Some parents also returned a questionnaire which was also very helpful. The majority of parents are very satisfied with the college.

Your teachers are extremely caring and supportive. The college offers you good opportunities, both personally and academically, to get the skills and qualifications that will help you succeed in life. The range of courses and subjects on offer allows you to study things that you are particularly interested in. Plans for the sixth form will ensure that more of you can continue to develop your skills to an even higher level. Your headteacher is helped and supported by an equally impressive senior team and a committed group of governors. Most of you behave well in lessons and around the college. However, it's a pity that a very small minority of you, especially boys, don't always behave as well as you could. This means they miss out on so much that the college has to offer, something they may regret later in life. Levels of attendance are still too low; many of you do not attend regularly enough. We were particularly pleased to see that some of you are making a greater effort to attend college more regularly and on time. The staff, managers and governors all know what has to be done to help your college improve still further. Your help and contribution are essential ingredients in the college's future. You can help your teachers and the college by:

- Improving your work and effort in mathematics. In particular boys need to understand the value that employers place on qualifications in mathematics and English – it's important you leave college with proof of your skills in these subjects.
- Making sure you are at school every day and behave well in all your lessons so that all students can do as well as possible. We have asked your teachers to plan lessons carefully so that students of all levels of ability can play a full and active part in their lessons.

I hope that you all do well and realise your ambitions at Fleetwood Sports College.

Yours sincerely

Vincent Ashworth

Her Majesty's Inspector of schools