

# Settle College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121689
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292204
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Harrison

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>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	13–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	577
6th form	132
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs B Fiorato
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr W Bancroft
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Giggleswick Settle North Yorkshire BD24 0AU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01729 822451
<b>Fax number</b>	01729 823830

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<b>Age group</b>	13–18
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2007
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This small comprehensive school serves the market town of Settle and the widespread surrounding rural area. Almost all students are of White British heritage with very small numbers from a range of minority ethnic groups. Almost all students speak English as their first language. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds but, overall, their social circumstances are above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is average. The college has been a specialist school for technology since 2004. The new principal took up his post in September 2006.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving college. Students and their parents appreciate the improvements that have taken place this year. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, but the strong and effective leadership of the principal is an important strength of the college. He very quickly assessed what improvements were needed and, in two terms, he has tackled both immediate problems and longer term weaknesses with considerable skill and energy. Most importantly he has succeeded in getting the staff 'on board' with moving the college forward. However, it is too early to see the full impact of the improvements. There is still work to be done in developing the skills of some middle leaders to improve consistency in good practice across the various subject areas. Nevertheless, progress so far is sufficient to indicate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

Students arrive in college with standards that are above the national average and their standards throughout Years 9 to 11 remain similarly above average. Hence their achievement is satisfactory overall. Last year, however, some students did not do as well as they should. The college's leadership thoroughly investigated the reasons for this underachievement and took remedial action. For example, they moved rapidly and decisively to overcome weaknesses in the quality of teaching and to establish tighter control over students' completion of coursework. Assessment records for the current Year 11 show that these improvements are having a positive impact on students' progress and there is no longer any significant underachievement. Achievement in English and mathematics is good and this is particularly important for students in their future careers.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. They know how to keep safe and understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy college, particularly the community spirit, the friendship and the good relationships with teachers, though they are less enthusiastic about some lessons. Nevertheless, they understand the importance of education and their attendance is good. Students usually behave well but, in a few lessons, learning is disrupted by poor behaviour and this is reflected in concerns raised by both parents and students. Students feel that the college listens to their views and are pleased with the changes made as a result of the Student Voice committee's recommendations.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, though it does vary significantly across different subjects and teaching groups. Most teachers plan carefully and provide appropriate activities to enable students to learn effectively. However, pupils' concentration weakens when sometimes lessons are rather slow or the activities not sufficiently engaging. The college's curriculum is satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in the arrangements for information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11.

The care, support and guidance for students are satisfactory overall. The school provides good pastoral care and there have been recent and important improvements in the arrangements for supporting vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The support for students' academic progress is satisfactory; an improved tracking system has just been introduced, but it is not yet being used to its full potential in identifying students who are falling behind and ensuring that they get back 'on track'.

The college's specialist status in technology has produced improvements in resources, particularly ICT equipment and interactive whiteboards. Primary schools benefit from the good work the college does with them in technology. Examination results in technology and science are above

average. However, the college did not meet its GCSE target last year; there are weaknesses in the ICT curriculum and some ICT resources are not being used to full effect. Therefore, the school is not yet making the best possible use of its specialist status to drive up standards.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Students enter and leave the sixth form with standards in line with the national average and consequently, make satisfactory progress.

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Almost all students complete their courses and many progress to further or higher education. However, while behaviour and attitudes in lessons are satisfactory, not all students make best use of their study time.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, although some inconsistencies remain across the various subjects, especially in the quality of feedback that students receive on their work. Students choose from an appropriate range of academic courses. The college is increasing the number of vocational courses, for example, with the introduction of a course in forensic science, in order to meet the needs of all students more precisely. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Systems for supporting and caring for students are established. However, the careers and academic guidance students receive is inconsistent. Until recently the college has not had a rigorous system for setting targets and then measuring and evaluating students' progress in relation to those targets. New arrangements have been introduced, but have yet to have a full impact in improving students' achievement.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some action has been taken to improve provision, but it is still too early for it to have had full effect. The college recognises the need to review the management structure in order to improve its effectiveness.

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

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good and that students are always provided with suitably challenging and engaging work.
- Make better use of assessment information to identify weaknesses in students' progress and take suitable action to overcome difficulties.
- Improve the consistency of leadership and management at all levels.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 3**

Standards in Years 9 to 11 are above average and students' achievement is satisfactory. Students make good progress in the core subjects in Year 9 so that test results in English, mathematics and science are very much better than might be expected from their test results when they were 11 years old. However, in Years 10 and 11, students' progress slows down so that GCSE results, although above the national average, only represent satisfactory achievement overall by these students.

There are several reasons for the slower progress in Years 10 and 11. For example, there have been, and still are, some weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, even though teaching is satisfactory overall. Also, until this year, the college has not worked closely enough with parents in encouraging and supporting students' progress. The college has identified these and other problems and is working effectively to overcome them. For example, parents' evenings have been reinstated, an improvement which parents particularly appreciate.

Students in the sixth form make satisfactory progress and gain examination results that broadly match the national average.

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

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The college considers students' personal development and well-being to be good but inspectors judge these aspects, including students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, to be satisfactory. The school has responded to a weakness identified in the previous inspection and students now benefit from several good initiatives to improve their understanding of cultures other than their own. However, students' opportunities for reflection are limited, notably in assemblies and form time. Students enjoy coming to college; their attendance and punctuality are good. Attitudes to learning are generally satisfactory. Students' concentration is particularly good when the teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboards that have been provided as a result of the school's specialist status. Many students make helpful, though often brief, contributions to lessons, where required and are usually patient when teachers' presentations are too long. Although behaviour is satisfactory overall, a small but persistent minority of students continues to disrupt learning in a few lessons.

Understanding of issues such as healthy living and care for others is developed well through discussion in form time, in personal, social and health education lessons and by the Student Voice committee. Students feel safe in college; bullying is rare and dealt with effectively. Students enjoy sport and extra-curricular activities, but currently have only a few opportunities to take responsibility. Students acquire the good literacy and numeracy skills they will require in their careers, but their ICT skills are not developed well enough.

Students in the sixth form organise various charity events and act as mentors for younger students; some are trained as counsellors. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges the need to give sixth form students more opportunities to develop their leadership and organisational skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Managers and teachers have recognised a need to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A development group has been established to encourage the sharing of good practice, and staff training has become more focused on teaching and learning. However, this work has yet to have a full impact and the quality of teaching varies significantly across the school.

Teachers generally structure their lessons carefully to reflect the guidance they have been given by the college's leadership. Good relationships are usually established between teachers and students. In the better lessons, the pace of learning is brisk, students are told exactly what they are expected to learn and teachers plan for students to be fully involved in the various activities. These features are less evident in the weaker lessons where, for example, students sometimes become bored when teachers talk too much. Occasionally, teachers do not succeed in managing the poor behaviour of a few students.

Teachers often make good use of ICT equipment to hold students' concentration and interest. However, opportunities are missed to involve students fully in the use of interactive whiteboards. The marking of students' work is generally satisfactory and students know the levels at which they are working. However, most only have a vague idea of how to improve. Only in the better lessons do teachers use assessment fully to inform students about the next steps in their learning.

Students in the sixth form benefit from teachers' good knowledge, both of the subject and of precise examination requirements. Students work conscientiously in lessons, but their answers to teachers' questions are often brief and they are not always as actively involved as they should be in developing a thorough understanding of the topic.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The curriculum meets students' needs and enables them to achieve satisfactorily. The curriculum has several good features. For example, in Years 9 to 11, all students have two lessons a week of physical education which is important in promoting healthy exercise. The Flexible Learning Programme provides well for students who are in danger of becoming disaffected and is successful in enabling them to gain appropriate qualifications. The range of optional subjects for Years 10 and 11, and in the sixth form, is satisfactory but there are only a few vocational courses and this restricts students' choice and their range of opportunities to achieve. There has been some useful broadening of the curriculum in technology and science as a result of the school's technology college status, and more is planned.

The college is improving its liaison with partner middle schools because it has recognised that there are difficulties in maintaining students' progress across all subjects when they move between schools. Closer cooperation is being established to ensure that work is not repeated or missed. Students' personal development is enhanced by a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, with a particular strength in sport and outdoor activities, together with a good range of visits.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The college judges these aspects to be good but, in doing so, it has not put enough emphasis on the effectiveness of the support provided for students' academic progress which, although improving, is satisfactory. Teachers keep adequate records of students' achievement, but this information is not always used sufficiently to ensure maximum progress by all students. Nevertheless, Year 9 students agreed that: 'the school helps

us make progress and develop our abilities' and considered their guidance for Key Stage 4 options to be effective. By contrast, students in the sixth form identify a need for better guidance on their plans for the future.

Pastoral care is good. Students are well supervised in school and on excursions. Safeguarding procedures and risk assessments are in place and regularly reviewed. Teachers are familiar with students' individual needs, especially those who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers and support staff provide effective support to enable these students to make satisfactory progress towards individual targets. Teachers promptly and efficiently refer to external agencies, as and when required.

Students appreciate the new rewards scheme and the praise they receive for good work and effort. The school has recently introduced an improved behaviour management policy which is having a positive impact on students' behaviour. However, the procedures are not yet being used effectively in all lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The principal, ably supported by his deputy principal, has taken quick and effective action to improve many aspects of the college's work. However inconsistencies remain, particularly in teaching. Middle leaders monitor the work in their areas, but some of this monitoring lacks precision. For example, departments sometimes place too much importance on the examination grades that students gain, rather than on the progress they have made. Similarly, lesson observations emphasise what teachers do rather than how well students learn.

The college now has a core of skilful and enthusiastic governors who understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and have begun to challenge and hence to help the school to move forward. The college has taken action on all the issues from the previous inspection and made satisfactory progress in overcoming those weaknesses. The management of the sixth form is satisfactory, but the pace of change has been slower than in the main school and the new arrangements for evaluating students' progress are long overdue. Hence, the college's capacity for improvement is good in Years 9 to 11 but only satisfactory in the sixth form. The college provides satisfactory value for money.



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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>	<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>	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	3
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	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
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	3	

### The quality of provision

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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	
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**

Inspection of Settle College, Settle, BD24 0AU

As you know, my colleagues and I visited the college this week to find out how well you are getting on.

Thank you very much for making us so welcome and for making our visit so interesting and enjoyable. In particular, thank you to those of you who talked to us and told us what you thought about the college.

We judged the college to be satisfactory and rapidly improving. One of its strengths is the particularly effective leadership provided by the new principal. You told us how the college has improved since he arrived. I was very impressed by the way you understood and valued the improvements, even though some of the changes have been a bit difficult to accept, particularly for Year 11. We also heard how much you appreciate the friendly atmosphere around the college and the good care that it provides. You are well informed about how to keep safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

However, despite the recent improvements, there are still things about the college that could be better. You make satisfactory progress in your work, but you could gain better examination results than you do. Therefore, we are asking teachers to make sure that all the work they plan for you is challenging and really holds your interest. We have also asked them to make better use of information about your levels and grades to make sure that all of you achieve, and hopefully exceed, your targets.

We hope that you will play your part in the college's improvement by working even harder than you do. It will all be worth it if you get better results with which to move on to the next stage of your education and into your future employment.

I wish you all the best for the future.