

Chasetown Specialist Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124469
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	293009
Inspection dates	25–26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Marion Thompson

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	764
6th form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Maddocks
Headteacher	Priscilla Slusar
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002
School address	Pool Road Burntwood WS7 3QW
Telephone number	01543 685828
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chasetown Specialist Sports College is an average sized school, which gained specialist status in September 2004. Most of the students are of White British origin. On entry to college, students have above average standards. This was lower for the current Years 10 and 11, where standards on entry were broadly average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than usually found. Standards on entry to the sixth form are average. The headteacher was appointed four years ago, following a lengthy period without a permanent headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The college provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Students enjoy college life, and the wide variety of activities offered, like the concerts and shows promoted by the music department. They benefit from a sound curriculum, which is increasingly well matched to their needs. However, the most able students do not make sufficient progress in Years 10 and 11, especially in English and science, because teaching does not always provide them with a sufficient level of challenge. Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, assessment and marking are not used consistently to provide students with clear feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve their work. Speaking skills, an area of particular weakness, are not developed consistently in all lessons. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because individuals are well known to their mathematics and English teachers, who retain the groups throughout the college.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior team provide a clear sense of direction for the college, based on accurate self-evaluation. Planning for improvement is sound. The recent rise in standards and improved achievement are a result of the well planned range of strategies the college has put in place, which are beginning to have a positive impact. However, the pace of implementation has been slow and somewhat uneven. Some strategies, such as using students' targets to help them improve their work, and using information from student tracking to plan suitable work, are not yet used consistently across the college. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, but has been slow. The work of the college is enhanced by a wide range of productive partnerships, especially with other schools and colleges.

Specialist sports college status has had a positive impact on students' good personal development, providing numerous opportunities for students to be active. Students have a good awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Sound care, support and guidance ensure students feel secure. There is little bullying within the college and it is dealt with effectively when it occurs. Students make a good contribution to the college community. They take an active part in local activities, and, for example, recently won a local debating competition, providing good role models for other students. Students' good basic skills, especially in mathematics and to a lesser extent in information and communication technology (ICT) and well-developed personal skills prepare them well for the next stage of their lives. Most parents appreciate the work of the college and feel it supports their children well. One parent typical of many wrote: 'The college is a friendly and welcoming place, which cares about the well-being of individuals as people rather than just statistics.'

A small proportion of the schools, where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which has areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory overall. Students' achievement is satisfactory and they reach broadly average standards. Most students have positive attitudes to work. Care, support and guidance are good. Students' progress is monitored effectively and the college provides good guidance

on how to improve, which is much appreciated. However, there is more limited advice on careers routes other than university.

Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. In some lessons, there is insufficient opportunity for students to discuss their understanding, although in others there is good discussion which enables students to develop good speaking skills. The curriculum is satisfactory. Links with another local school help the college to provide a broader and more flexible curriculum. The introduction of more vocational courses next academic year is designed to attract more students of middle ability for whom current provision is limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of more able students, especially in English in Years 7 to 11 and in science in Years 10 and 11, by ensuring that teaching provides all students with a sufficient level of challenge.
- Ensure students' speaking skills are developed in all lessons.
- Ensure that teachers provide clear guidance to students on how to improve their work through feedback in class and marking.
- Ensure that planned changes are implemented rapidly and consistently across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards are average and progress is satisfactory. Students are on track to reach their realistic targets. By the end of Year 9, students reach above average standards, and make satisfactory progress. Standards in science have risen sharply because staffing problems have been resolved and teaching has improved. In mathematics, standards are well above average and students make good progress. In English, whilst standards are above average overall, more able students do not make quite as much progress as they should.

In 2006, results in GCSE were average. Middle and higher ability students made inadequate progress from their above average starting points, with too few attaining the highest grades. In the current Years 10 and 11, standards are broadly average, representing satisfactory progress from students' average starting points. Despite recent improvement, more able students still do not make enough progress, especially in English and science. The strategies the college has put in place over the last year are beginning to close the gap, but there is further to go. Students make good progress in mathematics, music, art and geography. Lower ability students make good progress because of well planned support and continuity of teaching in English and mathematics. Speaking skills are an area of relative weakness on entry to the college. By Year 11, a substantial minority of students still lack confidence in expressing themselves in extended answers and developing their ideas through discussion. Standards in the sixth form are average overall and achievement is satisfactory. Close support is now provided for individual students who underachieve, which is resulting in improved achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' development and well-being are good. Most students enjoy school, behave well and adopt safe practices on the premises. Attendance is good. Students show respect for one another and for staff, taking responsibility, such as reception duty, willingly. In the sixth form, students assume considerable responsibilities for sporting activities. They provide support for younger students, for example in paired reading. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Concerns from the previous inspection about students' spiritual development have been adequately addressed, for example by providing more opportunities for students to reflect in the arts and on themes presented in assembly. Students take at least two hours of physical exercise each week and are increasingly aware of healthy life-choices, such as nutrition. They involve themselves well in the college and in a diverse range of activities which benefit both the college and the local community. Most students are well prepared for the future and develop good awareness of the world of work and financial responsibility. Sixth formers develop into mature, thoughtful, independent learners. The college is working hard to raise the aspirations of the small number of students who are too easily satisfied, when they could do better. Learning is occasionally constrained by low-level disruption, but students respond well to the college's efforts to keep this to a minimum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and contribute to the sound progress students make. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they use well to motivate learners. Students enjoy their learning and take pride in their work. Relationships are based on respect, and students are enthusiastic and attentive. Slower learners are supported well and make good progress. However, in a small minority of lessons there are insufficient opportunities for students to take an active part and they become inattentive. Occasionally, especially in Years 10 and 11, tasks are not matched to students' needs and do not present enough challenge for the most able students. In some lessons, insufficient attention is paid to developing oral skills and some students lack confidence in class discussion. In the sixth form, most teaching is sufficiently challenging and engages students in intellectual discussion. In weaker lessons, there are too few opportunities for debate about new knowledge and understanding.

Assessment and marking are satisfactory, but inconsistent. Marking of work is sometimes infrequent, for example in science and English. Students' awareness of their levels or target grades and clear advice on how to improve the quality of their work are not well enough developed in some classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The college provides a broad and balanced range of activities which meets the needs of most students. Personal development and citizenship are promoted well and students enjoy the exciting activities, such as members of the army leading team-building activities. The curriculum for 14- to 16-year-olds is becoming increasingly flexible in matching the needs of individuals, for example through a variety of vocational options, including wood crafts and stone masonry. The impact of these courses has been seen in the improved behaviour and motivation of participants. To address underachievement, boys and girls are taught separately in some Year 10 and 11 English lessons, which has resulted in increased motivation and confidence and higher standards, particularly for boys. However, curricular planning within individual subjects does not always cater sufficiently for the most able, or seek to develop literacy skills across the whole curriculum, especially in Years 10 and 11. The sixth form curriculum is enhanced by well planned links with a neighbouring school. Plans are in place to make further provision for students of middle ability, for whom provision is currently limited.

The college offers a good variety of enrichment activities. Specialist college status provides a wealth of sporting activities for students as well as many opportunities to gain training and coaching qualifications, working with partner schools and the local community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Overall, this aspect is satisfactory. Good provision for personal development builds students' self-esteem and confidence. The support and provision for helping students with learning difficulties and disabilities to make good progress is particularly effective. The college collaborates well with other agencies. Support for guiding students into appropriate options in Year 10 and the sixth form is good. A new system of tracking students' progress to identify individual performance and to inform ways of tackling underachievement has recently been introduced, and is beginning to raise achievement. However, it is not applied consistently across all departments. The college has satisfactory arrangements for risk assessment, but these are in need of updating. Arrangements for safeguarding students are satisfactory.

Support and guidance in the sixth form are good. There is good academic guidance and students are well prepared for future studies. There are sound resources for students' personal and independent work and students make good use of these. Careers guidance is rather limited, with good information on progress to higher education, but more limited guidance on job opportunities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management at all levels, including the sixth form, are satisfactory. In some subjects, leadership is good. For example, it is good in music, mathematics, art and geography,

where students achieve well. The college knows what it needs to do to improve. However, the pace of improvement has been slow with variations between, and within, subjects. For example, in some subjects checking on students' progress and acting on identified weaknesses in achievement are good. However, in some departments this information is not used as effectively, despite the efforts of senior management. The capacity for further improvement throughout the college is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities, but has been slow to ensure the college is making sufficiently rapid progress.

The college has good procedures to seek the views of parents and students, and acts on them. Partnerships with outside agencies and organisations are good. In particular, acquisition of sports college status has played a significant role in establishing good links with organisations that contribute effectively to students' adoption of healthy lifestyles.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2	2
The attendance of learners	2	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

The quality of provision

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

26 April 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Chasetown Specialist Sports College, Burntwood, WS7 3QW.

- Thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views on your experience of college. Most of you were very positive about your college, so you will not be surprised to know that we found it provides you with a sound education. Here are some of the good things we found.
- You work hard and make satisfactory progress. Standards are beginning to rise further. Those of you with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.
- You benefit from the changes made to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form, which provide you with a wider range of opportunities.
- Attendance is above average, so well done! It helps you to learn better. Improvement is also a result of your positive attitudes to learning.
- Good arrangements for personal development ensure you develop into confident and mature young adults and make a good contribution to the college and wider community.
- The headteacher and other staff are working hard to make sure the college carries on improving.
- Specialist sports status has enabled the college to provide you with a wide range of sporting activities which many of you enjoy and which improve your health and fitness.
- We have asked the college to:
 - improve standards for those of you who are more able, especially in English in Years 7 to 11 and in science in Years 10 and 11, by making sure work is set at the right level of difficulty
 - make sure teachers always provide you with good guidance on what to do to improve your work, both in class and through marking
 - ensure that you have lots of opportunities to develop your spoken language skills in all lessons
 - make sure that planned changes are made quickly and consistently across the college.

We hope you will continue to make progress and enjoy your learning.

Best wishes

Marion Thompson Lead inspector