

Ifield Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126071
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	293457
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Sean Hanan HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	946
6th form	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Wood
Headteacher	William Lind
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2002
School address	Crawley Avenue Ifield Crawley RH11 0DB
Telephone number	01293 420500
Fax number	01293 420501

Age group	11–18
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

This is an average size community college. The proportion of students with learning difficulties is around the national average, as is the proportion that qualifies for free school meals. Twenty percent of students have a first language other than English. The college relocated into new buildings in September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ifield Community College is a good and improving college. The new buildings provide an excellent learning environment and the atmosphere is orderly, supportive and purposeful. Students generally enjoy being at college, behave well and attend regularly. They feel safe and are encouraged to eat healthy food and take regular exercise. The progress they make during Years 7 to 11 is outstanding, because good teaching and learning are supported by outstanding care and guidance for the students, including those with learning difficulties. A particular feature of the college is the way in which performance information is used very well to set targets for students and to monitor their progress. Students join the college with prior attainment that is below average; by the time they reach Year 11, standards are broadly average. GCSE results have improved steadily since the last inspection and are set to improve again in 2007. In the sixth form, many students start with GCSE results that are below what is normally expected for advanced level studies. Students make good progress and examination pass rates are around the national averages. Overall, achievement and standards are good.

Teaching and learning are good. Some lessons are outstanding. However, a small minority are dull and uninspiring. The college is aware of the need to improve in this area. There is a good range of courses for students and many other activities are available during the day and after college.

The college provides good value for money. Resources to support learning are excellent. Leadership and management are good. Since the previous inspection, the college has successfully tackled the issues that were identified, has raised achievement and improved provision. It is very well placed to continue improving.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Provision for students in the sixth form is good. The college encourages students who are less well qualified at GCSE to continue their studies at advanced level. They make good progress in the sixth form. Pass rates at the end of the sixth form are around the national averages. They are good in a number of advanced level subjects, such as physics and dance. Overall teaching and learning are good and some lessons are outstanding. Students are very well informed about their progress and know what they have to do to improve their work. There is a good range of advanced level, vocational and practical courses supported by an extensive enrichment programme and outstanding pastoral support. Students are confident and good careers guidance prepares them well for employment and higher education. They value the good relationships they have with teachers and the individual support they receive. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning in a small minority of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall. Students join the school with standards that are much lower than average. By the end of Year 9, standards are closer to the national average and closer still by the end of Year 11. In 2006, 51% of students in Year 11 gained five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C, slightly below the national average. The proportion that gained five or more A* to C passes including English and mathematics was also below the national average. Both rates have improved steadily over the past few years and are set to improve again in 2007. Overall, students make outstanding progress up to the age of 16, because they make good progress in lessons and are supported by outstanding care and guidance, particularly to set target grades and to monitor their progress. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) value added indicator for 2006 places the college in the top 5% of maintained schools when attainment in Year 11 is compared to the students' attainment when they joined the college. The college is successful in improving the achievement of the many different groups of students in a diverse intake. For example, those with learning difficulties, those with particular gifts and talents and those who speak English as an additional language make progress at the same rate as other students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are good. Effective links with local primary schools ensure that the transition process is well managed. Good support is provided for students on arrival to help them to settle in to the college. Students enjoy their education. Their positive attitudes are shown through their enthusiasm for most of their lessons and by the high numbers who participate in the wide range of activities offered after college.

Attendance is satisfactory and is around the national average for secondary schools. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the college, is good. Students respect the environment of the new buildings and there is a calm and orderly atmosphere. They feel safe and know that the rare incidents of bullying will be dealt with effectively. Students are thoughtful and support each other. They are confident to talk to staff if they have personal difficulties.

Students are aware of the importance of diet and exercise in leading healthy lives. The canteen produces only healthy meals and there is a good uptake of sports provision at lunchtimes. The views of students are respected. They serve their community well, take responsibility and develop good personal skills through, for example, the school council, fund raising activities and supporting younger students. Sixth form students take on leadership responsibilities and all do community service. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through weekly citizenship lessons and purposeful tutor time, students develop a good understanding of issues that will affect their adult lives and learn skills they will need in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to engage and enable students to make good progress in lessons. They make clear what students should learn by the end of the lesson and focus them throughout on how they can achieve these outcomes and assess their own progress. For example, in a music lesson students developed grade criteria based on what they had learned so far and used them to assess each other's compositions. Students have a good understanding of the standard of their work and know what to do to improve. Most teachers plan appropriate and interesting activities, use probing questions and make good use of the electronic whiteboard to engage students. A small number of lessons are less effective because they do not take enough account of the abilities and interests of the students and provide uninteresting or mundane tasks which fail to motivate them. The outstanding lessons include a wide variety of activities and excellent interaction that ensure a good pace to learning and that all students are suitably challenged. Students are well supported by teaching assistants. Behaviour in lessons is good and generally well managed by teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college provides a good range of courses and activities for the students. In Years 7 to 9, there is a strong emphasis on literacy which the college correctly believes will improve achievement in all subjects. From a good grounding which meets all the national requirements the college responds to students' interests and abilities to provide a wide range of academic and vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. Students are helped to stay safe and healthy through a well designed and taught personal, social and health education programme, a healthy eating policy and good opportunities for sport and other activities. A wide range of clubs and additional activities contributes well to students' enjoyment and achievement. The college works well with others to enhance the provision for its students and they are well prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is outstanding. Excellent monitoring and tracking, based on accurate assessment for learning and a wealth of performance information, ensure that students make outstanding progress. Challenging target grades are set in all subjects and they are reviewed regularly. Intervention for those underachieving is effective.

Child protection procedures are secure and staff are well aware of the needs of vulnerable students. Risk assessments are meticulous. There are well established links with outside agencies and students have good access to help and advice from a range of sources. Students with

learning difficulties and those whose first language is not English make outstanding progress because of the very effective support provided for them. Parents and carers receive regular reports and are involved when there is a concern about their child's progress. Careers advice is good and students are very well informed about their future options and alternative career routes and progression. The wide range of work experience opportunities in Years 10 and 12 gives students a valuable insight into the world of work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management of the college are good. Effective leadership by the headteacher, supported by other college managers, has been a key component in the improvements in students' achievement over recent years. Leadership throughout the college is sharply focused on teaching and learning. Governors work effectively as a 'critical friend' and are very supportive of the college. Equal opportunities underpin the ethos and issues are effectively addressed.

The processes for monitoring and improving quality are excellent. Achievement data are used very effectively both to improve overall performance and to set and monitor aspirational targets for the students. Teachers are observed regularly and the information collected is broadly accurate and well used. Inspectors agreed with almost all the analyses in the college's self-evaluation. The new buildings provide an excellent learning environment. Staffing and resources are used effectively to provide good value for money. Additional teachers and learning assistants are used well to target improvements in students' achievement.

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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?	2	2
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	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	3	3
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?	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	2	
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?	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?	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	1	
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 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

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your college. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work and your life in college.

- We believe your college provides a good education for you in excellent surroundings.
- The headteacher and the other people in the college with responsibility make decisions with your best interests at heart.
- Nearly all of you attend regularly, behave yourselves well and are confident and polite.
- You enjoy coming to college and you make outstanding progress in Years 7 to 11 and good progress in the sixth form.
- You are all valued as individuals and the support you get from your teachers and tutors is outstanding.
- You contribute well to the life of the college and the local community.

Your college needs to:

- improve lessons in a small minority of cases.