

South Holderness Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118080
Local Authority	East Riding of Yorkshire
Inspection number	295408
Inspection dates	6–7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Marianne Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1084
6th form	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jeremy Glover
Headteacher	Mr Martin Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2006
School address	Station Road Preston Hull HU12 8UZ
Telephone number	01482 899315
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Age group	11–18
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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

South Holderness Technology College is a much larger than average secondary school. It serves a large rural area to the east of Kingston upon Hull, in the East Riding of Yorkshire. Over 1,000 students travel to the college each day by bus. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. While the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally, the proportion of those with a statement of special educational need is broadly average. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. Since 1997, the college has held technology specialist status and in 2007 it achieved the Financial Management Standard for schools.

When the college was inspected in February 2006, it was judged to require a Notice to Improve.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

South Holderness is an improving college, which provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. There are significant strengths in the very good leadership of the headteacher and in the care and support for students, especially for those with particular needs and difficulties. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection especially in aspects of leadership and management and in developing the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, the headteacher recognises the need to continue to raise achievement for all students and to reduce the inconsistency in performance between subjects.

Standards overall are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Effective support and training has been given to many teachers and this has led to an improvement in the overall quality of teaching, which is now satisfactory. Most students make better progress in lessons than they did at the time of the last inspection but the rate of progress is inconsistent. Too many teachers still do not use sufficiently the informative tracking data detailing the progress of individual students. As a result, students underachieve in some lessons and standards are not rising as fast as they could.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. There have been improvements in behaviour, although this is still seen as a concern by many of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. The minority of students who misbehave generally respond well to the college's systems and personal support to manage their behaviour. Staff work hard and succeed in helping students develop in maturity to become responsible young adults. This work is appreciated by students who commented that the use of behaviour strategies is fair; however, not all teachers are equally effective in using them. The positive links with primary schools smooth the transfer of Year 7 students into the college. The care, guidance and support provided for students are a tangible part of the college's drive for improvement. Students' progress is now more carefully tracked and analysed to ensure that strategies are in place to support their learning. The college's curriculum is satisfactory and continues to be developed to meet the needs of all students. Students in Years 9 and 10 told inspectors they appreciate the wider variety of courses now on offer. The curriculum is enhanced by the college's technology specialist status that helps to widen curriculum choices and has had a positive impact on the college's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and on the development of ICT facilities in its local primary schools. Specialist status has had a significant impact on standards in mathematics. This is especially so for those Year 7 students who attended the master classes for gifted and talented students when they were in primary schools. The impact of specialist status on standards in design and technology has been less consistent.

The headteacher and senior leadership team have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of all aspects of the college. They are well supported and challenged by members of the governing body. Senior and middle leaders monitor students' progress at regular intervals. However, not all leaders are using the information from their monitoring to inform their planning for improvement. This means that the pace of change and progress made has been uneven. Nonetheless, there is now a more consistent and positive response from staff to the new structures. These provide clear expectations and challenges for all staff as they work to raise standards and achievement in subjects. The college now gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Although standards in 2006 were broadly average, the progress made by students was inadequate. Current tracking data shows that in most subjects students are now making satisfactory progress. However, there is still some underachievement. The personal development and well-being of students is good. Students have ample opportunity to exercise responsibility and contribute to the life of the college. They act as peer mentors, helping younger students, are members of the college council and several take on paid employment as cleaners. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection, but there is still insufficient challenge and promotion of active and independent learning in some areas. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is very much restricted to AS and A-level courses and does not meet the needs of those students who chose vocational courses in main college and wish to continue them into the sixth form. Students' progress is well tracked and monitored, and guidance on progression is effective. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory. The school has devised an action plan to improve the performance of the sixth form. While this identifies accurately the key priorities for development, progress in achieving some key objectives has been slow. This is because the systematic evaluation of the findings from the college's own monitoring is not carried out with enough rigour to drive the changes needed for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve students' achievement and reduce the inconsistency in students' performance between subjects.
- Improve the quality of learning by making sure that all teachers use assessment information to help them plan lessons which are matched closely to students' needs.
- Ensure that the outcomes from the rigorous analysis of information about the college's performance form the basis for further improvements.
- Match the curriculum for students in the sixth form more closely to their abilities and aspirations.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards in Year 11 are average and are improving. Overall achievement, given students' starting points in Year 7, is satisfactory. Students are now making up for a legacy of underachievement that was noted at the time of the previous inspection. The attainment of the students on entry to the college is broadly average. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly average; however, fewer students reach the higher levels for their age in English than in mathematics and science. Data provided by the college indicates that more students are expected to reach the level expected for their age in national tests this year than in 2006.

In 2006 the proportion of students who gained five or more GCSE passes at grade C and above, including English and mathematics, increased and is in line with that expected nationally.

However, students' attainment in English remains weaker than in mathematics. Data provided by the college indicates that the current Year 11 students are expected to reach their targets this year. The progress students make is satisfactory overall, although it is still more rapid in Years 10 and 11 where the curriculum is better suited to individual students' skills and abilities. Progress for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. This is because they are well supported and their progress is tracked and monitored rigorously.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Students' understanding of moral, social and cultural issues is developing effectively through subjects, such as English and citizenship. Aside from religious education, opportunities for their spiritual enhancement are very limited. Students generally enjoy the college and attend regularly. Most are keen to do well, although some still do not display a great enthusiasm or commitment for their studies. Students' attendance is well monitored, reinforced by the college and matches the national average.

Students generally get on well with each other and with staff. Most are responding well to the college's clear expectations and this is seen in their improving behaviour in lessons and around the buildings. Parental concerns about poor behaviour have some justification, however, as a number of students continue to present a considerable challenge to the college. The revised approach to behaviour management is having a positive impact in reducing the use of exclusion, withdrawal, and detention as sanctions. Students say they appreciate the fairness of the staged consequences to their actions. They feel that whilst some teachers do not use the system consistently, it is helping to improve behaviour in the classroom.

Students make positive contributions to the college and wider community, notably through their strong support for various charities and their fundraising activities. They value the range of opportunities to take responsibility as prefects, peer mentors or by serving on the active year and college councils. Students are confident that their views are taken seriously and are proud of their contributions; for example, in improving the anti-bullying policy and their proposals to strengthen the way the college rewards positive behaviour and achievement. Students are developing a secure awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through the effective guidance programme. Careers advice, the growing range of vocational courses, and positive links with local employers provide students with useful skills and knowledge that support their preparation for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Inspectors agree with senior managers that teaching and learning are satisfactory. The college has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching and since the last inspection there has been a concerted drive to improve the quality and to involve students in their learning. There is now a consistent approach to lesson planning and most lessons begin with a starter activity and end with a session where teachers check what students have learned.

Students are keen and enthusiastic learners when their teachers have high expectations of them and when the purpose of learning is made clear to them. Too often, however, teachers do not allow students to answer in detail or to develop their opinions. Relationships and student behaviour are good when they are involved in active and stimulating work. Good use is made of teaching assistants, especially in their support of students with learning difficulties. The best lessons are characterised by a brisk pace and students are engaged in a range of stimulating activities. This is because the teachers have a thorough knowledge of students' capabilities and plan lessons accordingly. Conversely, too many lessons are teacher-dominated and involve students in work that does not interest them or is not challenging enough. Teachers refer regularly to what students are required to do to achieve a particular grade. However, marking of students' work is inconsistent and not always helpful in telling them how to improve. As homework is not set regularly this hinders students in developing the skills needed to manage their time and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets statutory requirements. It includes some good aspects as a result of actions taken to ensure that it is more relevant. This is especially evident for students in Years 10 and 11 where the curriculum is particularly good. There has been significant development of Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) vocational courses and the number of students taking up these options is increasing, particularly in construction. The college's plans for the national 14–19 curriculum options are starting to develop and are well matched to the needs of all students as they progress to the sixth form through the widened Key Stage 4 curriculum.

The citizenship programme, which extends throughout the college, is a strong feature of the curriculum and contributes well to students' understanding of health and social issues. There is a wide range of extra-curricular, learning and revision support and enhancement activities. Many students are able to attend these after-school programmes because the college funds late transport on two days of the week. The appointment of an extended school coordinator has raised the awareness of these activities in the wider community and particularly with the feeder primary schools. Not all teachers are developing students' literacy and numeracy skills consistently in lessons. Nonetheless, the college has had some success in entering some students for the Adult Literacy and Numeracy tests. More able students in Year 10 also take early entry GCSE in English and statistics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The college provides satisfactory care, guidance and support for students. There is a good level of commitment to the welfare of all students in the college. The procedures for child protection are secure and understood by staff. Systems for risk assessment, including those for out of school visits, are thorough. Required checks for ensuring the suitability of staff to work with children are carefully carried out. Students are well known to staff, and despite students having some concerns about bullying, they trust adults in the school to take them seriously and to deal with any bullying issues successfully. The support for vulnerable students and for those

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is sensitive and wide ranging. Teachers, support assistants and others link closely with outside agencies to give these students constructive, individual help. As a result, these students make good progress. Students know their targets but are less clear about how to improve their work. Those likely to do less well than they should are identified and academic and pastoral staff work together to provide support to bring them back on track. Students receive helpful guidance about their subject choices in Year 9 and their subsequent career and post 16 opportunities. Sound systems are in place to set curriculum and other targets, and checks on students' progress towards these are regular.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school evaluates leadership and management to be satisfactory and inspectors agree. The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear direction for the school. He is ably supported by a senior leadership team, which has developed exceptionally well since the recent reorganisation to give clear roles and responsibilities. Working well as a team, senior leaders give effective support to all aspects of the college's work. They are strongly committed to raising standards. The governing body is supportive and provides appropriate challenge to the college. The headteacher and governors have been ready to confront difficult issues when these have been identified. Governors are involved in the life of the college and show great commitment, not only to monitoring the progress that is being made, but also in their direct involvement, for example, in mentoring students and in their links with designated subjects.

Leadership is appropriately devolved to middle level leaders, who are given responsibility for the quality of provision in their subject areas. However, there is still too much variation in the quality of subject leadership resulting in variations in the quality of provision and students' performance in subjects across the curriculum. In some subjects, long term staff absences and cover arrangements have adversely affected provision. Despite this, since the last inspection, the college has improved the quality of teaching and learning and the achievement of students is slowly improving. This demonstrates the colleges' satisfactory capacity to improve further. Senior leaders are the first to acknowledge that while improvements have been made there is still more that needs to be done.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

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	3

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	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 June 2007

Dear Students

South Holderness Technology College, Hull, HU12 8UZ.

Following our recent visit to your college, we would like to thank all of you who helped and talked with us during the inspection. We would also like to tell you what we found. You will all know that when the college was inspected last year it was given a Notice to Improve. Mr Cooper and his staff have worked hard to improve the college's performance and we now find that the college no longer needs a Notice to Improve. South Holderness is an improving college and is providing all of you with a satisfactory standard of education.

You have contributed to the improvement. Many more of you are behaving sensibly and working hard in lessons. Sometimes you do not concentrate all the time and the inspectors saw some of you chatting in lessons. We were impressed by the way many of you are taking responsibility to help others through your work as prefects, peer mentors and as members of the year and college councils. We also noticed several members of the sixth form who are employed after school to keep the school clean and tidy!

We have asked Mr Cooper to make sure the college continues to improve by:

- raising your achievement and making sure there is less difference in your performance in different subjects
- planning learning to be matched to your needs and making it as interesting as possible
- using the analysis of the college's performance to plan further improvements
- ensuring that the sixth form curriculum includes a wider selection of subjects.

We know that you will all play your part in helping the college to improve further. Good luck to those taking exams this month!

With good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector