

Burleigh Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120236
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	295418
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Hodgkinson

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under the Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	848
6th form	380
Day care	61
Funded nursery education	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Martin
Headteacher	John Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2006
Date of previous day care inspection	10 May 2004
Date of previous funded nursery education inspection	10 May 2004
School address	Thorpe Hill Loughborough LE11 4SQ
Telephone number	01509 554400
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by six Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large college is situated on a spacious campus on the eastern edge of Loughborough. The socio-economic backgrounds of students are broadly average overall. However, whilst some students are drawn from areas of considerable affluence, others come from areas of considerable disadvantage. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is above average. A high proportion, about a quarter, speaks English as an additional language.

The college campus is used extensively by the local community, and the college itself manages a range of additional services. These include a boarding house which currently accommodates 38 students, and a pre-school playgroup serving children from two to four years of age. The college has specialist sports status, which was first awarded in 1997. When the college was last inspected in March 2006, it was given a Notice to Improve. It was judged to require significant improvement in relation to progress made by students in Years 10 and 11.

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 this college no longer requires significant improvement. Its effectiveness is satisfactory. The College Leadership Team, with strong support from the governors and local authority, has responded robustly to the recommendations of the previous inspection report and the college has made sound improvement. Students' achievement is now satisfactory. Standards by Year 11 have risen and are now broadly average, representing satisfactory progress for students across Years 10 and 11. The very substantial underachievement by specific groups of students, especially evident in the GCSE results of 2005, has largely been eliminated because students' progress is tracked much more carefully and additional support given when appropriate. Still, however, the slowest progress is made by lower attainers, and particularly lower-attaining girls. Whilst the satisfactory curriculum has been broadened and is increasingly well tailored to suit students' capabilities, the quality of lessons for lower attainers is not always good enough to motivate them and excite their interest.

The significant improvement in students' attendance and punctuality since the last inspection is testament to their generally more positive attitudes to, and enjoyment of, college. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall. The college's sports specialism has helped to promote good awareness of health issues and plenty of involvement from students in physical activity. Students respond particularly well to the opportunities presented in lessons and, through participation in a wide range of enrichment activities, to take responsibility and show leadership. They make good contributions to the college and wider community, and generally behave responsibly around the well-managed site. Care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory, and have been improved by stronger links with 'feeder' high schools to ensure that students are better prepared to start their examination courses in Year 10. However, there is a lack of coherence in the monitoring of students' personal development. Records of students' attitudes and behaviour are not always collated and shared effectively between staff, and communication with parents on these matters are occasionally poor.

The college leadership has taken rigorous action to improve the quality of teaching and learning through an extensive programme of monitoring and professional development of staff. Expectations have been heightened by the establishment of clear and realistic attainment targets for each student. Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory, the quality and regularity of marking is a significant weakness across a number of subjects so that students get insufficient regular guidance about how to improve their work. The rate of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning has varied between subjects. This is linked to a variation in the effectiveness of subject leadership in evaluating performance and planning for improvement. Nonetheless, leadership and management are satisfactory overall, and the college has demonstrated a sound capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

This is a good sixth form. It is well led, with high expectations for its students' academic and personal development. Students join the sixth form with a wide range of prior attainment, but it is a little below average overall. They achieve well to reach standards which are broadly average. These standards have risen strongly since the last inspection. The good progress students make in most subjects is a reflection of the generally good quality of teaching. Students'

progress and attendance is very closely monitored against clear and challenging targets, so that they know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Parents are kept well informed of students' progress and of their careers and university choices. Students feel that they have access to very good support and guidance and to good resources for learning, although they bemoan the loss of a dedicated area for silent study. The broad choice of courses offered to students is steadily expanding, both in-house and through greater collaboration with other local schools and colleges. Additionally, a strong programme of curricular enrichment, including a very effective scheme for mentoring younger students, has a highly positive effect in promoting sixth formers' skills of leadership, independence and working with others. Students' personal development is good across Years 12 and 13. They develop into mature and responsible young people who are well prepared for the next stage of education or working life.

Effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of the boarding provision for students is good. The college has effectively addressed the small number of issues raised at the last Commission for Social Care Inspections (CSCI) inspection. The standard of care offered by house staff is good. Students are happy and secure, and friendly relationships prevail between the students and with staff. Students generally make good progress with their studies. Those who attend the academies for elite sports training, whose regime differs from the other boarders, have their specific needs well catered for. Students are able to keep in regular contact with their families. House staff, in combination with the students, organise a good range of visits at the weekend. The House Council allows students' views to be represented. However, students do not have ready access to the internet to support their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop a more consistently high quality of subject leadership in evaluating the performance of subject departments and planning for improvement.
- Improve the quality and frequency of teachers' marking of students' work in Years 10 and 11 to give students more regular guidance on how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the curriculum and lessons offered to lower-attaining students, especially girls, are adapted well enough to stimulate their interest and support better achievement.
- Improve the tracking of students' attitudes and behaviour in Years 10 and 11, and improve communications with parents when problems arise.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students join the college in Year 10 with broadly average attainment from tests in their previous schools. Those currently in Years 10 and 11 are making satisfactory progress to reach standards which are also broadly average. Students' achievement across Year 10 and 11 is therefore satisfactory. This marks a significant improvement since the last inspection, when GCSE results had shown considerable underachievement, especially for specific groups, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Since that time, standards have risen. GCSE results in 2006, whilst below average, showed a general improvement in progress for all groups, including most

of those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Whilst there remained a marked difference in GCSE results across subjects, results improved in mathematics and were significantly better in English in 2006. Standards in both mathematics and English are currently broadly average. The reason for the sustained improvement in standards and progress is a much sharper system for tracking students' progress against clearly defined and well-publicised targets. Students who are underachieving are identified for additional support to boost their performance. However, the slowest progress continues to be made by students at the lower end of the attainment range, and particularly girls.

In the sixth form, students make good progress to reach broadly average standards. Pass rates rose sharply across academic and vocational subjects in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Students' social development is good and they make good contributions to the life of the college. Sixth form students have an especially strong involvement, including through the attendance at governors' meetings of members of the Post-16 Council. For students in Years 10 and 11, improvements in standards in English and mathematics since the last inspection mean that they develop sound skills for the workplace and later life. Vocational courses, work experience opportunities, links with other providers and leadership opportunities through the sports college add to this aspect of personal development. Students have a good understanding of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles and participate in a good range of physical activities.

The college is developing an ethos in which students generally feel they are valued and supported. Students work well together and respond positively to good teaching. In lessons where they are not challenged to take initiative and responsibility, students are insufficiently engaged. Behaviour management strategies are deployed by teachers with more consistent effect and the number of exclusions has decreased significantly. There are occasional instances of poor behaviour but generally, students feel safe and secure and act responsibly. College strategies to counter bullying and racism are effective and the number of incidents has declined sharply. Effective measures have been taken to improve attendance and punctuality and they are now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

College managers accurately judge the quality of teaching and take vigorous steps towards eliminating unsatisfactory teaching, of which little now remains. Professional training has been provided for teaching staff, and good practice in the college is used as a model for teachers to improve their personal effectiveness. Expectations for students' progress have been raised by the setting of clear targets for achievement. As a result, many teachers now plan effectively to help students reach their targets, and offer additional support to help those who are not achieving their potential. Teaching assistants, now linked closely with particular subjects, work very effectively to support learning in the classroom. Marking of work is, however, inconsistent

in Years 10 and 11. Students do not routinely receive quality advice on their work, with grades, corrections and guidance on how to improve. Teaching methods do not always engage those students who are not easily motivated and work is not always matched to learners' needs, particularly in respect of girls with previously low attainment.

In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is good and students learn well. Rich stimuli and a high expectation of work and study characterises learning in most lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum across all years offers good breadth of courses, although the quality of the courses at Years 10 and 11 remains variable. A growing strength of the curriculum is the extent to which it is tailored to meet the interests and capabilities of students. Courses are constructed for students from a range of academic, vocational and applied options at all levels. Good links with the local further education college and other providers enable some students to pursue more specialist vocational qualifications off-site. Such opportunities have served to engage students who were showing signs of disaffection. Improved links with students' former high schools mean that students are given effective advice and guidance on course options before they arrive at the college, enabling most to 'hit the ground running' on examination courses in Year 10. Nonetheless, the quality of the curriculum experienced by lower-attaining students is variable. These students respond well to work which is set in interesting, lively and relevant contexts, and where they are given precise guidance about how to improve, such as in applied health and social care. In some lessons, however, work is unstimulating and takes too little account of students' prior learning, causing them to 'switch off'.

Students' academic and personal development is well supported by a broad range of enrichment activities and study support programmes. This has a particularly positive effect on students' achievement in the sixth form.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The level of care, guidance and support students receive is satisfactory. Secure child protection and health and safety arrangements are widely understood by staff and regularly reviewed. Students talk positively about how well they settled into college on arrival. Links with the feeder high schools have been enhanced to enable more effective provision to be made for those who do not have a positive attitude towards education or who have behavioural or attendance problems. Students with specific learning difficulties are well supported. The links with external agencies, such as integrated services and multi-agency support, are strong and support those who are vulnerable or at risk particularly well. There is, however, a lack of coherence in monitoring and tracking the attitudes and behaviour of students. There is no central record of where and when students' behaviour deteriorates so incidents cannot be effectively analysed to inform future interventions. Communications with parents are not always effective when problems occur in this respect.

Assessment systems to track students' progress are effective, and particularly so in the sixth form. Progress reviews where tutors talk to parents and students about their work and set

targets for improvement are well received by parents. However, weaknesses in the marking of students' work in Years 10 and 11 mean that they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The principal, senior leaders and governors have set clear direction for improvement since the last inspection. Effective training and support for teachers has been put in place from a variety of sources, including specialist expertise of the college's own staff. Improvements have been based on senior leaders and governors developing an accurate view of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The development of the skills of middle leaders to evaluate the work of their departments is, however, at an early stage. There is considerable variation, for example, in the use departments make of their analysis of GCSE results to guide their planning. Self-evaluation in English, for example, is incisive and has led to clear plans for action and sharp improvements in standards. In mathematics, self-evaluation is not as sharply focused on an analysis of examination data and does not clearly link priorities for improvement to such an analysis. Some departments have recognised the need to address underachievement of lower-attaining girls, whilst others have failed to recognise the issue. Nonetheless, teachers are generally now making more effective use of data showing students' progress against targets to inform their planning. Leadership of the sixth form is good and has successfully created an ethos where expectations for students' achievement and conduct are high.

Governors have made a good contribution to the college's improvement and ask challenging questions to hold the college to account. The college manages its resources, site and premises well, in spite of the falling rolls which have led to a budget deficit. The sports college specialism continues to be well managed and bring positive benefits to the college and wider community.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for by qualified, experienced staff in a welcoming, bright and clean environment. They are helped to grow in confidence, overcome any anxieties and be ready for school. Staff have clear expectations for children's behaviour and so children behave well, grow in maturity and learn to play happily together. Staff deal with minor incidents between children well, although the behaviour management policy does not make it sufficiently clear how bullying might be resolved should it occur. Children's well-being is maintained effectively because procedures for safeguarding children and ensuring their health and safety are well known to all staff. Effective systems for children's departures are now firmly established.

Children enjoy play and achieve well because there is always something to suit all their interests. They are provided with a good range of play activities from which they can choose freely or which are led by adults. They are able to sit quietly with a book or play outside in the 'den' or as a group with a 'parachute'. Staff understand children's needs and backgrounds well and give good support to those with specific learning or language difficulties. They effectively promote children's good health because they encourage children to be active and enjoy daily outdoor physical activities. Every precaution is taken to protect children from the sun, but the lack of permanent shade outdoors means that staff have to restrict the amount of time children play

outside in hot weather. Children now have free access to clean drinking water. They choose from a range of healthy snacks and enjoy trying new tastes, such as Chinese food.

The playgroup is well organised and runs smoothly, and staff work effectively together as a team for the good of the children. Relationships with parents are good and result in comments such as 'I am very confident that the care and attention my children receive is very, very good'.

Since the last inspection in May 2004, there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

- Provide permanent shaded cover to ensure children are protected from the sun and able to play outside for more extended periods of time in hot weather.
- Ensure that the behaviour management policy records the organisation's approach to dealing with any incidents of bullying.

Effectiveness of funded nursery education

Grade: 2

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning because the quality of teaching is good. Staff's secure knowledge of the guidance for the Foundation Stage helps them to plan activities which meet children's needs well. Staff provide stimulating activities for the children and care for them well. They use a variety of teaching methods and make the most of learning opportunities to sustain children's interest. Staff value and praise children's achievements highly. Children make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and have positive attitudes to learning. The assessment of children's learning has improved well since the last inspection. An effective key-worker system is used to observe the children's progress and this influences detailed planning for the next steps in their learning. Parents are now better involved in their children's learning and receive good information about their child's progress through comments and photographs in the 'yellow book'.

Children enjoy the many planned activities. They make good progress in their personal and social development because there are many opportunities for them to learn together, routines are well established and expectations for behaviour are clear. More effective use is now made of snack time and children develop good independence as they choose healthy foods from the 'café'. Children experience good activities which promote their early language skills and writing skills, for example through role play and finger painting. Children's mathematical skills develop well through interesting activities such as looking at bark rubbings patterns and window shapes on a learning walk. Limited resources means that there are insufficient planned opportunities for children to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. Children's work on display and in photographs demonstrates that opportunities for creative development are good. The College's extensive facilities are used well for children to extend their physical skills and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, for example through a bug hunt. Staff make the best use they can of the small hard-surfaced outdoor area to enable children to experience a regular 'free-flow' of learning activities. However, the lack

of independent access to the wider grassed area beyond the fence inhibits children's capacity to exercise, explore their environment or develop greater independence in their learning.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are good. The coordinator and play leader have built a strong working relationship and have developed a shared vision amongst all staff. Regular training, reviews of policies and procedures and visits to other settings help staff to reflect on the quality of their own practice. The playgroup has a good relationship with parents and is popular. The playgroup contributes well to the College's community provision and provides good work experience placements and shared expertise to enable students to follow their courses of study.

Recommendations or actions to improve the funded nursery education

- Seek ways to enlarge and improve the outdoor environment so that children have soft and hard areas to play on and greater independent opportunities to develop their physical skills and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Offer children more opportunities to explore learning through ICT.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
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	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	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	3	

The quality of provision

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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

The effectiveness of the funded nursery education

The quality and standards of the funded nursery education	2
How effective is the funded nursery education in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective are teaching and learning?	2
How effective is the partnership with parents and carers in promoting the nursery education?	2
How effective is the funded education in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the funded nursery education led and managed?	2
Does the funded nursery education meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Is the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development education fostered?	Yes
Has the nursery education improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the funded nursery education require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you for the welcome you gave to my colleagues and me when we visited the college for its recent inspection. You told us how much you felt the college had improved since it was inspected a year ago. We agree with you, and judge that the college is now satisfactory. It helps students to reach standards that are average by Year 11 and to make satisfactory progress overall. In Years 10 and 11, students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are also satisfactory. The sixth form is good. Standards in the sixth form are average, and it makes good provision to help its students achieve well.

Indeed, in our judgement, the college has some particular strengths. A satisfactory curriculum offers you a broad choice of courses which are increasingly well tailored into course programmes that meet your specific needs and interests. There is a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities which help you to make a very positive contribution to the college and wider community. They develop your skills of leadership and working with others, as well as supporting your health by encouraging you to participate in a good range of physical activities.

The college has improved soundly since its last inspection because of the clear direction given by the principal, senior leadership, and governors. We have indicated four main areas in which the college needs to improve further.

Firstly, whilst leadership and management of the college are satisfactory, we have asked subject leaders to better evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their departments to help them plan for future improvement. Secondly, whilst teaching is satisfactory and teachers are checking your progress carefully against your targets, marking could be improved to give you clearer and more regular feedback on how to improve. Thirdly, we have asked the college to check that the curriculum is always stimulating and pitched at the right level for those who find learning less easy. Finally, although care, guidance and support for you are satisfactory, there could be better systems for keeping a check on students' attitudes and behaviour, and for keeping in touch with parents on these matters.