



Coleridge Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110866
Local Authority CAMBRIDGESHIRE
Inspection number 300106
Inspection dates 20–21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Alan Alder HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Radegund Road
School category	Foundation		Cambridge
Age range of pupils	11–16		Cambridgeshire CB1 3RJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223 712300
Number on roll (school)	413	Fax number	01223 712301
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr Mark Carrington
		Headteacher	Mr Andrew Hutchinson
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–16	20–21 February 2007	300106

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Coleridge Community College is situated in south Cambridge. Most students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than the national average, with students from British Bangladeshi backgrounds forming the largest group. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average, as is that of students who have learning difficulties or disabilities, or who have a statement of special educational need. In the last five years the school has twice faced the possibility of closure. This caused student numbers to fall and made the recruitment and the retention of staff difficult. Its future is now assured. Since September 2005 it has been part of the 'Parkside Federation', a federation of local schools.

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 improving school. Some aspects of its work are good. Its leadership and management are strong. Both the principal and the governing body have a clear and highly ambitious view of how they wish the school to develop. This strongly influences the nature and pace of its development. The decision to join the local federation of schools has had a profound impact. The recruitment of teaching staff is easier. Good quality schemes of work and other resources are shared with an outstanding secondary school in the federation. Tried and tested management approaches have been adopted. These include the close tracking of students' progress and a thorough and systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The capacity to improve is good.

The school's good aspects are mainly to do with the provision it makes for students: the teaching, the curriculum and ways in which students are cared for, guided and supported. The result of this good provision is evident in students' increasing enjoyment of school and in their improved behaviour. There is also evidence that the progress students are making in their work is improving, though there are some inconsistencies. For example, in Years 10 and 11 many make good progress but it varies widely between different subjects. Standards throughout the school, while still exceptionally low, are beginning to improve. Progress in Years 7, 8 and 9 has been satisfactory in recent years, though it has dipped recently. Some inconsistencies in teaching remain to be tackled, such as the quality of marking and advice given to students about how to improve their work, and the setting of regular homework, but teaching is of good quality.

The stimulating use of computer technology for teaching, such as interactive whiteboards, as well as the improved curriculum and the much improved appearance of the school are much appreciated by students. The changes are improving attitudes. Attendance too has improved, though recent improvement has been slow and the attendance of older students is a concern.

The great majority of both students and parents speak positively about the school. One parent said, 'the school has improved greatly'. Students say they feel safe. Behaviour is good. Students' personal development is satisfactory. Their adoption of healthy lifestyles is good as far as healthy eating is concerned, but there is insufficient time for physical education for many students in Years 10 and 11.

The development of skills for the workplace is satisfactory. Work experience and enterprise education make a good contribution, but low standards achieved in literacy and numeracy to some extent counter this, though these areas are improving.

The curriculum is good. It offers suitable opportunities for students with differing interests. A significant development has been the introduction of an off site course to develop the work skills of a small number of students who may otherwise become disaffected. This has brought about improvements to their attitude and attendance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of achievement throughout the school.
- Improve attendance, particularly in Year 10.
- Increase the effectiveness of the work of some faculties so there is greater consistency, for example in the quality of advice given to students through the marking of work, and the setting of regular homework

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. When students enter the school, in some years their standards are below average and in other years they are exceptionally low. By the end of Year 9 in 2005, the standards reached by students were exceptionally low overall and in science. They were below average in English and mathematics. Given students' starting points, this represents satisfactory progress. Students at the end of Year 11 also achieved exceptionally low standards, though they were below average in English and mathematics. This shows good progress in these subjects since students joined the school. There has been a good improvement in the proportion of students leaving school with five or more passes at GCSE and a good reduction in those leaving with no passes.

Provisional data for 2006 shows some decline in both standards and progress by the end of Year 9, but continuing improvements by the end of Year 11, when all groups of students make at least satisfactory progress. Many make good progress, including most students from minority ethnic groups, and students with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development is satisfactory, with some good features. Their moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is satisfactory because there are insufficient opportunities to engage in personal reflection. Students feel safe and are pleased the school responds quickly to any concerns they have. Attendance is satisfactory for most students but inadequate in Year 10. Bullying is rare and racial harmony is good, as students mix very well together. Instances of racial disharmony are infrequent and of a minor nature. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the community, partly as a result of the citizenship programme and Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not sufficiently well developed to equip pupils for their future lives and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. As a result, the progress made by students, although still satisfactory, is beginning to improve. There is no inadequate teaching. Relationships between adults and students are very good. Typically lessons begin briskly and students' attitudes, motivation and behaviour are good. In the most successful lessons teachers assess students' needs and plan activities that engage and challenge all students so that they make good progress. However, some of the planned work is too demanding for some students and better judgements are needed about this aspect of a minority of lessons. Teachers have high expectations and provide challenging support to small groups and individuals so that they are successful in their learning. In most lessons the pace of learning is good but opportunities to review learning at the end of lessons are often lost. Students are encouraged to express their ideas orally in response to good questioning. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory because it is too intermittent and does not often enough give advice on how work could be improved. Support staff and teaching assistants are used effectively to support students' learning. Provision for students with learning difficulties is good, enabling them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is increasingly matched to meet the different abilities and interests of students. A programme of courses for a group of Year 10 students has been particularly effective in re-engaging them with learning. The school's 'Learning Centre' effectively supports many students in their work, during and outside school hours. Enterprise education and work related learning opportunities are developing well. Careers education and work experience are well organised. Citizenship and religious education are not fully in place across the school though they are being developed. The range of extra curricular activities is very good, especially in music, and makes a strong contribution to students' development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Students feel valued, supported and known as individuals. This is because there is an effective system in place to monitor and track their progress, and because of good mentoring sessions by tutors. The quality and frequency of these is not consistent. The school has a minority of pupils with emotional, social or behavioural difficulties. They are managed well. Relationships between staff and students are good and ensure that problems are picked up early. There are good links with specialist outside agencies to provide specialist support to individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The principal provides outstanding leadership and is well supported by his leadership team.

The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is good, being detailed and accurate. It has provided a strong basis for prioritising improvements and for making decisions about how they should be tackled. A particularly significant aspect of the work has been to strengthen teaching. The monitoring of teaching quality and the follow up work to bring about improvement through training and coaching has been effective. It is clear that teaching has improved.

Leaders with responsibility for subject faculties are supported well by regular meetings with a senior leader. This holds them to account but also provides an opportunity to talk through issues and how best to tackle them.

The governing body is well informed. The governors have a good understanding of the issues facing the school. Each governor has an oversight of one of the school's faculties or some aspect of the school's work, such as staff development. Leaders in charge of faculties also present reports to governors annually and are thereby held to account.

The school has been given an additional budget to fund its recovery. This is being well spent, with clear benefits to students' well-being and learning. Value for money is good.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	3
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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
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

22 February 2007

Dear Students

Coleridge Community College, Radegund Road, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, CB1 3RJ

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we inspected your school on 6 February. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you.

We found that your school is satisfactory and improving. It has some good features. For example, teaching and the curriculum are good. Your school looks after you well and takes care to make sure you are safe, that your behaviour is good, and that you are learning well. All of this is possible because of the strong leadership of your school's principal and the good way in which the other leaders and managers are working. We were also very impressed by the appearance of your school. The corridors and classrooms and the school garden are very welcoming and very pleasant places to be.

We have recommended some ways in which your school can improve further. These are: to increase the progress you make so that you do as well as you can in tests and examinations; to improve attendance, particularly for those of you in Year 10, though it is important that you all attend school regularly; finally to make sure that in all subjects your work is marked more frequently with some advice on how you can improve, and to make sure you are set homework.

Best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector