

Rawlett School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124435
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	301299
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Davinder Dosanjh 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	1123
6th form	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Buckingham
Headteacher	John Brodie
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2004
School address	Comberford Road Tamworth B79 9AA
Telephone number	01827 57178
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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

Rawlett Community Sports College is a large comprehensive school with a small sixth form. The majority of students are of White British background with small numbers from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the percentage with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Approximately a third of students in the sixth form qualify for the educational maintenance allowance. In September 2005 the school gained specialist status in sports. The school's leisure centre is open seven days a week and is managed by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Rawlett Community Sports College is a satisfactory school. The school has strengths in aspects of the personal development of its students. Students enjoy school and there are good relationships between teachers and students. A high proportion of students participate in a range of extra-curricular activities from school productions to a computer club for girls. Students contribute to the school community well, for example working as peer co-counsellors and running stalls at the annual spring fair. Students say they feel safe. Parents generally endorse these good features of the school.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average overall. Performance has been affected by a number of staffing difficulties, particularly in core subjects. Some parents also voice concerns about the numerous staffing changes. Nevertheless, based on their attainment when they join the school, students make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11. At Key Stage 4 the pattern of performance has been inconsistent. Although the situation is improving, the school acknowledges some groups of students and subjects can do better. At GCSE the subjects which continue to be successful have the strongest teachers.

The good curriculum is reviewed annually and meets the needs of students well, ensuring support for basic skills in literacy and numeracy and suitable vocational options. Specialist status has brought benefits to the school by increasing the range of enrichment opportunities. Many students take sports leader qualifications which involve the organisation of tournaments for local primary schools. The provision of information and communication technology (ICT) has increased across the school. However, specialist status has not sufficiently raised achievement in the whole school.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While there are good features, lessons are not consistently well planned and the work is not always hard enough for students. Good practice is not sufficiently shared across the school. Systems to track and monitor students' progress to ensure students achieve as well as they can have improved but are not yet fully embedded or impacting on raising achievement. The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school and has sensible plans for improving satisfactory teaching.

The senior leadership team clearly understands its priorities and it has been strengthened by some recent appointments and a restructure. As a result, key intervention strategies have quickly been put into place to improve achievement, although it is too early to judge the impact of these. The school undertakes detailed monitoring of its performance although this is not always followed up well enough. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for its students. Achievement is satisfactory and most students make the progress expected of them from starting points that are lower than in many sixth forms. The curriculum offers a good breadth of mainly AS- and A-level courses. The school is part of the Tamworth 14 to 19 consortium which collaborates to increase student choice. However, some students follow courses which are not appropriate for them and there are a limited number of vocational options. Teaching is satisfactory and is not monitored rigorously to develop its effectiveness. Students make a good contribution to the school, acting as mentors for Year 7, especially in mathematics and English. They act as prefects

and are good ambassadors and role models for younger students. Students are very positive about the support and guidance they receive from their form tutors and teachers. Many successfully go on to higher education. The sixth form block is valued by students, in particular the space for private study and use of a computer room. Monitoring of attendance has improved since the last inspection but requires further development. Students have a good range of enrichment opportunities in Year 12 which most take up. A small group of students successfully achieved second place in the district area finals for the young enterprise scheme. Leadership and management of the sixth form are satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the planning of lessons so that work is always sufficiently challenging for all students.
- Use the best practice to improve the quality and consistency of teaching across the school and develop the monitoring of teaching in the sixth form.
- Effectively manage current difficulties in staffing in order to minimise the negative impact on students' achievement. A small proportion of schools whose 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

Students' achievements are satisfactory. The prior attainment of students joining the school is broadly average and they make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 have been rising since 2004, particularly in mathematics and science and are above average. Results in English have remained static and broadly average. Progress in all three subjects continues to be satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, there has been an inconsistent pattern of performance where results declined in 2004, rose in 2005 and remained the same in 2006. In 2006 the percentage of students gaining five or more higher A* to C grades was just below the national average. However, the percentage of students gaining these grades in mathematics and English was similar to the national average. Students performed particularly well in art and design, geography, history and ICT. They did less well than expected in some subjects, namely single award science, French, business studies and sociology. Results in mathematics and double award science showed a decline in 2006. Most students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported and make satisfactory progress. The school recognises that some of students are not achieving as well as they can and is increasingly putting in place targeted intervention to rectify this.

Students' progress in the sixth form is satisfactory overall. In 2006 standards at AS level were below average and too many students did not achieve a pass grade. Results are average at A level and for vocational courses. There is significant variation in students' attainment in different subjects. The percentage of higher grades at A level declined in 2006. Based on GCSE results, students generally achieve the grades expected, but some are not achieving their full potential.

The school has had mixed success in meeting both statutory and specialist school targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Behaviour is satisfactory. The majority of students behave sensibly around the school. However, a number of parents raised concerns about the behaviour of a small number of students who disrupt lessons. There have been no recent permanent exclusions and the number of fixed-term exclusions has fallen in the last two years. Attendance is slightly below the national average and the school has recently created the post of attendance officer to improve it. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. In an assembly on 'What can you buy with 65p?' Year 9 students were moved by images of starvation in Third World countries.

Students enjoy school. This is shown by their high levels of participation in a wide range of activities, including productions and sporting events. Good relationships are a feature of the school. Most students feel that the recent introduction of CCTV cameras has improved their level of safety in the school. They eat and drink healthily and the high number undertaking sports leader qualifications demonstrates their willingness to adopt active lifestyles.

Students make good contributions to the school community by taking an active role in the student council. They say it is a privilege to be a member of the council. They contribute well to several worthy causes in the community. Students' preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory overall reflecting their academic progress and they benefit from the successful work experience and careers programmes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons have clear learning objectives, provides students with much individual support and there is a positive climate for learning. A common approach to lesson structure is having a positive impact in many lessons. Relationships between students and teachers are good and students enjoy many of their lessons. Teachers know the progress their students are making but do not always take this into account in planning their lessons.

In the most effective lessons teachers are clear about what they want students to achieve and provide a variety of interesting, relevant and stimulating learning activities that engage them well and will raise attainment. Good use of questioning assesses students' progress and consolidates their learning. Students have good opportunities to work independently and in groups. Students' thinking skills are developed well and they have fun.

In less effective lessons too much time is spent by students listening to the teacher. Most students follow the teacher's instructions passively, but occasionally behaviour is disruptive. Students do not make the good progress necessary to raise attainment because the learning activities they are given are not sufficiently difficult. In some lessons there are periods of inactivity and planning does not take enough account of students' different needs. The marking in some students' books does not contain enough comments to guide learners on what they need to do to improve.

Students with learning difficulties and disabilities receive appropriate intervention and support and so make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The curriculum is good because it offers a variety of courses that match the range of students' needs and capabilities. Through effective links with other local schools and colleges the school is able to offer both academic and vocational courses together with meaningful educational experiences for those students who lack motivation.

The curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop healthy lifestyles through the provision of two hours of practical physical education for all students aged 11 to 16. Aspects of healthy eating are covered in science and food technology. This provision is further supported by an enrichment programme with components on healthy eating, the dangers of drug abuse and also on sexual and mental health. The provision for citizenship and personal and social education is currently met through a series of enrichment days such as the Holocaust day. Some subjects are addressing citizenship well. For example in Art, Year 11 students are leading a project to produce a textile panel for a local care home.

Students participate well in the many extra-curricular activities that are on offer, reflecting the school's specialist status in sport. For example, cricket and tennis areas are full to capacity with students practising their skills at lunchtime and the Duke of Edinburgh training programme is very well supported. Students are prepared well for the world of work, for example through an effective work placement scheme in Year 10.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Child protection systems are properly in place and safety checks on new staff satisfy national requirements. Health and safety, medical and accident reporting systems follow local authority guidelines and are frequently reviewed.

There is effective pastoral support for students through the newly appointed progress coordinators working closely with their teams of form tutors. Members of staff liaise effectively with multi-agency professionals to provide well for vulnerable students and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities. The induction arrangements for new entrants to the school are well planned and enable students to quickly settle in.

Progress coordinators use accurate data to monitor academic progress. They are improving the quality of guidance given to students to enable them to meet targets more effectively. Academic guidance is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school rightly prioritises improvements in teaching and learning and the raising of attainment. The senior leadership team has recently been strengthened. All members of the team have clearly defined responsibilities to raise the quality of teaching and achievement and standards. However, despite clear direction and accurate self-evaluation, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are no more than satisfactory. The school has struggled with recruitment and staff absence issues and some parents complain that their children's education is disrupted, particularly in mathematics and science.

Since the previous inspection, the school has improved provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. It is now much stronger. Middle leaders are aware of their responsibilities and are supported by line managers in monitoring the success of their faculties although the checks made on teaching in the sixth form are too infrequent. Overall, middle leaders focus on improving teaching and raising standards within subject areas but inconsistencies amongst teachers are still too prevalent. Managers do not do enough to ensure that the sharing of good practice improves the less effective teaching. The emphasis on tracking and supporting progress is helping students know and concentrate on their targets but there has been no noticeable impact on standards. Governors have good links with subject areas. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses but are unable to pinpoint why the school does not perform better.

The school is developing international links and works satisfactorily with partner institutions. However, a minority of parents criticise the effectiveness of the school's communications.

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?	3	3
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	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	3
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	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	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?	2	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	

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

18 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Rawlett Community Sports College, Tamworth, B79 9AA

I would like to thank you for the welcome you gave to my colleagues and I when we visited your school recently. Thank you for talking with us and giving us your views. We enjoyed watching you rehearsing for the 'Rock Challenge' and it was good to see so many of you involved in cricket and tennis activities at lunchtime. Sixth form students were enthusiastic and positive about the opportunities and support available to them.

Inspectors have judged the school to be satisfactory. The school has some strengths, particularly in the support for your personal development. These include:

- the good provision for extra-curricular activities that many of you take an active part in, particularly the sporting activities
- the good relationships that exist in the school
- you enjoy coming to school and feel safe there
- the contribution you make to the school community
- the good curriculum the school offers
- sixth form students' act as good role models for the rest of the school.

There are some things that the school can do to become better; we have asked the headteacher and senior managers to:

- manage the current staffing difficulties better in order to minimise the negative impact on your achievement
- make work more challenging for all of you by providing activities in lessons that link more precisely with what you are capable of
- share the best practice in teaching to ensure that there are more good lessons.

We encourage you to continue to support the school and play your part in developing it further. On behalf of the inspection team, may I wish you every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Davinder Dosanjh Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools