

Garforth Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108089
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	301369
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jan Bennett 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	2346
6th form	398
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Garforth
Headteacher	Mr R Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Lidgett Lane Garforth Leeds West Yorkshire LS25 1LJ
Telephone number	0113 2869091
Fax number	0113 2872727

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Inspection number	301369

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

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

Description of the school

Garforth Community College is a large mixed comprehensive school with around 400 students in the sixth form. The college serves areas that are less advantaged than average, together with some more affluent areas. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is low. Most of the students are White British and the proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is very low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is low. Garforth has had specialist performing arts college status since 2002.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Garforth Community College is a very vibrant and highly successful school led by an inspirational headteacher. The Every Child Matters agenda is at the heart of everything that the school does and the achievement of students at all levels of ability is very good; the standards attained in external examinations are very high.

Teaching is generally good with pockets of outstanding practice. Students enjoy their lessons, behave extremely well and make very good progress. In the best lessons, there is an excellent range of interesting activities and assessment is used well to support learning. In a small number of lessons, the work is repetitive and does not inspire the most able students. Nevertheless the students remain highly motivated and work very hard.

The quality of the care, guidance and support for students is outstanding and contributes to their success. The school is very inclusive and no student has been excluded this year; very effective specialist provision is available to meet the needs of those with the most challenging behaviour. Students are treated as individuals and every effort is made to ensure that they are on programmes of study that match their needs and aspirations. Imaginative curriculum innovations at Key Stages 3 and 4 are increasing flexibility. A wide range of vocational courses is offered to provide an attractive alternative to the more traditional curriculum. There are clear progression routes through to Key Stage 5, encouraging students to stay on in the sixth form who would otherwise have left education.

There is an extremely wide range of extra-curricular activities and participation rates are very high. The specialist performing arts status has supported significant expansion in resources and activities that are shared very well with other schools and the local community. The two-week Garforth Arts Festival, run by the college, attracts world renowned performers to the area. The college offers a good range of courses for parents to interest them in education and to raise aspirations. The new School Partnership Trust is designed to support the expansion of the extended school provision and to enhance work that the college does with the local community and schools.

Leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The headteacher has a clear and imaginative vision for the college and he is supported well by a very able team of senior managers and a strong governing body. The college has improved rapidly over the last few years and staff have been supported extremely well throughout the changes. Financial management is very good; spending is prioritised well and the college provides excellent value for money. However, some accommodation is poor and the college does not have the necessary funding to improve it. Governors, leaders and managers know the college well and performance is under regular review. There is a very strong drive for improvement leaving no room for complacency. The capacity to improve is excellent.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Sixth form provision has improved considerably. Over the last few years, achievement has been satisfactory. Managers have analysed the reasons for this and have taken decisive and effective action. They have strengthened academic guidance and personal support and introduced a broader range of courses that meets students' needs more effectively. Students are making

better progress this year and indications are that standards and achievement will improve in 2007.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share best practice in teaching and learning.
- Introduce more challenging activities into lessons to inspire high attaining students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Standards have been very high at Key Stage 4 for the past three years and achievement has been impressive. There are strong indications that standards will be higher in 2007 and achievement will be even better. At Key Stage 3, achievement has been similar, especially in mathematics, and standards have remained very high in all three core subjects for the last three years.

Students' progress between Key Stage 2 and 4 is excellent. Standards at Key Stage 4 have been consistently high for three years. In 2006, the proportion of students achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including mathematics and English, was 29% above the national average.

No group of students underperforms. At Key Stage 3, there is no difference in the standards of girls and boys. At Key Stage 4 girls attain higher standards than the boys but the gap is narrower than average.

Standards are more variable in the sixth form. GCE AS and A-level pass rates improved in 2006 and were very high; students also obtained higher grades than in previous years. Standards in vocational courses are around average. Achievement in the sixth form is improving and students are making good progress this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The personal and social development of students across the college is outstanding. The overwhelming majority of students enjoy their education and this is reflected in the very high levels of attendance. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong overall although the college has recognized the need to develop students' spiritual awareness further. Students develop very strong academic and personal skills which prepare them well for employment or further study.

Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the college, enabling students to learn without disruption. Students feel safe and well cared for. The rare incidents of bullying or harassment are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. Students have good working relationships with teachers and relate very positively to each other. Students know how to lead safe and healthy lives. They participate well in a wide range of sporting activities and many choose healthy food in the dining room.

Students are encouraged to take responsibility and their views are sought through an active student council. Sixth formers give excellent support to younger students through a well

developed mentoring scheme. Students are very keen to work with the wider community and stage many performances and concerts. They also work with local residents, helping them improve their computing skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and there is some excellent practice. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and the vast majority of students enjoy lessons. Teachers have high expectations and establish good working relationships in lessons, enabling students to progress very well. Students are highly motivated and work extremely hard. In the best lessons, teachers set a variety of challenging tasks and students participate and learn well. Students are encouraged to apply their knowledge, use their own initiative and reflect on their progress in relation to the lesson objectives.

In a small proportion of lessons there is little opportunity for discussion, the most able students are not always challenged enough and the activities are more routine, but students work hard nonetheless and make very good progress. Many students extend their skills and knowledge through after-school clubs.

Students are learning to assess their own work against a set of criteria or a checklist, but this is not consistent across all subjects. The quality of marking is variable but most teachers are giving detailed feedback on students' work, telling them how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The college has made excellent progress in tailoring its provision to meet individual students' needs. A recent innovation has been to offer Key Stage 4 curriculum options to Year 9 students whilst maintaining a strong focus on the core subjects of mathematics, English and science in preparation for Key Stage 3 external tests. At Key Stage 4 students can choose GCSE, vocational or work-related courses which lead to more advanced courses in the sixth form. Students in all the key stages have benefited from a broader, more flexible curriculum and many students are staying on in the sixth form who would not have done so in the past. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.

Specialist college status has supported an enhancement of facilities and a significant expansion in the range of courses offered in performing arts. It has led to many creative projects involving other areas of the curriculum. This college supports several primary and secondary schools through the sharing of good practice. The annual arts festival enables students to experience arts and music at the highest professional level.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The college places great emphasis on providing a safe and supportive environment where students can flourish as individuals. The integrated care, guidance and support are outstanding and are carefully adapted to meet individual students' needs. Staff work very hard to ensure that students are happy and can achieve their potential. The college makes very good use of external support agencies. Careers guidance is excellent and enables students to make informed decisions as they progress through college.

Academic progress is monitored very effectively and parents receive reports each term. Students have a very good understanding of how well they are doing. Actions are taken swiftly, where necessary, to ensure students stay on course to achieve. The 'Excellence Centre' provides high quality study support and the learning mentors and sixth form peer mentors are used well. The college does not exclude the small minority who find it hard to conform to the college's high expectations. Instead, alternative provision, including anger management training, is provided in the 'Skills for Life Centre.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides a strong vision and clear sense of purpose. This is shared by the senior leadership team and governors and is effectively communicated throughout the college.

The extended management team is strong and members work well together. There is a positive attitude and good teamwork throughout the college. Staff are effectively involved in planning and decision making. Performance management systems are robust and there is a good balance between accountability and support, enabling staff to achieve challenging targets. There is an appropriate range of professional development opportunities matched to priorities in the college's development plan and to the needs of individual staff.

The college strives to make appropriate provision for all its students; it helps individuals overcome their difficulties. The wider community is actively welcomed into college. Governors and managers work extremely hard to develop innovative and mutually beneficial partnerships with the local community. Strong partnerships have contributed significantly to the provision on offer.

Communication between the school and the governing body is good. The chair of governors has shown dedication to the school over many years and has a very clear strategic understanding of broad educational issues. Governors fulfil their statutory obligations well. They use their specialist expertise to benefit the college and participate in the life of the college as much as possible.

The resources available are very effectively deployed and financial management is robust. The school offers excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity to improve further.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
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

Inspection of Garforth Community College, Leeds, LS25 1LJ

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you, seeing you at work and hearing your views. Garforth Community College is an outstanding school of which you can be justly proud. Here is a summary of our findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- External examination and test results are very high and they have been for a number of years. Students at Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve very well and students of all abilities make excellent progress. There is more variation in the sixth form.
- Teaching is good overall and it is excellent in some lessons. You have very good working relationships with your teachers and they know their subjects well. In the best lessons, you are given a good range of interesting tasks to complete and you are learning to evaluate your own work. You reported that some lessons are boring and do not always stretch you so we have asked the school to make the quality of all teaching match that of the very best.
- The range of courses on offer is outstanding. There are an amazing number of extra-curricular activities and you participate well. We were very impressed with the work that you are doing for the Garforth Arts Festival.
- Your behaviour in and out of lessons is exemplary. You are polite and friendly and show respect for each other. There is very little bullying and you are developing a good awareness and understanding of other cultures and religions. You are prepared well for life when you leave school.
- The care, guidance and support that you receive are of the highest quality. There is outstanding work going on in both the Excellence Centre and the Skills for Life Centre to support anyone needing help to get back on track.
- Mr Edwards is an inspirational headteacher and he has many plans for improving the college. He has a very strong team of managers supporting him and they know exactly what needs to be done to make the college even better.

We would like to thank you for contributing to the inspection and for being so polite and helpful. We would also like to congratulate you on being part of an outstanding school and wish you well for the future.