

Slough and Eton CE Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110081
Local Authority	Slough
Inspection number	310201
Inspection dates	27–28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Janet Mercer HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	803
6th form	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Smith
Headteacher	Mr Graham Lush
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2003
School address	Ragstone Road Slough SL1 2PU
Telephone number	01753 520824
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Age group	11-19
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Slough and Eton Church of England Business and Enterprise College is a smaller than average non-selective school in a local authority with selective education. There are four grammar schools in the local area. A very high proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with an increasingly diverse mix of cultures, ethnicity and faiths represented in the school. There is a higher proportion of boys than girls in the school.

The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs is higher than average. Many students come from areas with relatively high social deprivation and the proportion of students eligible free school meals is well above the average. Almost three-quarters of the students do not speak English as their first language, though a relatively small number are at an early stage of learning English.

The school has full service extended school status and is a specialist college for business and enterprise. It has offered courses for a small number of post-16 students for several years and has had a formally designated sixth form since 2006. The school is currently undertaking a major rebuilding programme due for completion by September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Slough and Eton is a good school with some outstanding aspects. Achievement and standards have improved since the last inspection and students make good progress. Results in GCSE examinations have improved over the last few years, but there is still considerable variation in performance between different subjects. The senior leadership team has high aspirations and ambitions for continuing improvement and set challenging targets, which keep all staff clearly focussed on raising student attainment. The staff are highly committed and work hard to ensure that each student can achieve as much as they can. The school is strongly committed to building students' confidence, raising their self-esteem and giving them the belief that they really can do well.

Personal development is good in Years 7 to 11 and outstanding in the sixth form. Most students enjoy school and want to do well. The school has a strongly inclusive ethos, and caters very well for the increasingly diverse mix of ethnicity, cultures and faiths in the school. The different groups in the school get on very well and respect each other's different backgrounds, cultures and faiths. The school is a harmonious and cohesive community. Parents are supportive of the school and regularly attend parents' evenings to discuss their children's progress. However, they do not always attend other consultative events as much as the school would like.

Teaching is improving and is now good, with some outstanding teaching observed. Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. Teachers plan lessons well, and work hard to help students make good progress. However, there are still inconsistencies in setting and marking homework, and planning often focuses more on set tasks, than what students are actually learning. Senior leaders acknowledge that recently, with the distraction of the major building project, there has not been enough focus on monitoring homework and assessment.

The curriculum is carefully tailored to meet students' needs and to respond to the requirements of parents and the local community. Parents value the traditional GCSE curriculum, which they believe will provide their children with the best opportunities to succeed in life. The school has maintained a clear focus on raising achievement within the GCSE framework, as well as introducing a growing range of vocational options for those students who will benefit from this. The school makes good use of its specialist status in business and enterprise to enrich and extend the curriculum, and support raising students' achievement. Enterprise activities also support students' personal development, giving them opportunities to take on personal responsibilities and make positive contributions in the local and wider community.

The school takes good care of all its students, with strong pastoral and good academic support. Teachers and support staff know the students well and tailor support well to meet individual needs. Sixth form students are very positive about their experiences and the excellent care guidance and support they receive. A high proportion of students have identified learning needs and the effective support for them enables these students to make good progress. There are good arrangements to help Year 7 students settle into the school when they start, and students receive good information and guidance about subject choices for GCSE and post-16 study or employment. A high proportion of Year 11 students progress to further education and the growing sixth form offers a growing range of options for those who want to stay at school. Students who do not speak English as their first language receive good support in developing language and literacy skills and achieve good results in English in Year 11.

The school has built an outstanding range of partnerships across the community to provide good care, guidance and support for all students and to help raise attainment. There are some outstanding examples of how specialist status has enabled the school to work with a variety of business and education partners to raise standards. Work undertaken with the wider community is especially good and the adult learning centre is enabling local residents, many of whom are parents, to gain academic qualifications.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the sixth form is good. Care, guidance and support are outstanding and contribute strongly to students' outstanding personal development. Students join the sixth form with below average prior attainment and good teaching and excellent support help them to make good progress. Pass rates on vocational courses have been consistently high. Students value the fact that their teachers know them very well and monitor their progress closely.

The curriculum, based around a core of vocational provision at levels 1, 2 and 3, is very well tailored to meet students' needs and abilities. A small, but growing, range of AS and A level subjects is providing greater choice. Students receive good support for developing skills necessary for life and work beyond school. The majority of students progress successfully to higher level education or employment.

The recently appointed head of sixth form has a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. Managers acknowledge that results for students re-taking GCSE English and mathematics have been too low, and are actively seeking appropriate alternative courses to help students develop their functional literacy and numeracy skills. There is a strong focus on building confidence, enabling students to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. Students make a strong contribution to the school and wider community. For example, they organise charitable fund raising events, and act as mentors and role models to younger pupils in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of all teaching to that of the best, to increase the consistency of subject performance and raise standards.
- Ensure that managers at all levels are more sharply focussed on teaching and learning through self-evaluation, action planning, monitoring student work and assessment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Many students start school with well below average prior attainment. Whilst results in national tests in Year 9 remain below average, students make good progress from their starting points. Mathematics results have been better than those in English or science. Many students do not speak English as their first language and literacy skills are not always well developed when they start school. Students make satisfactory progress in English in Years 7 to 9, and very good progress in Years 10 and 11, leading to very good results in English language and literature in 2007. Results in GCSE mathematics have also improved over the last three years, but remain below the national average.

The proportion of students achieving 5 A*-C grades including English and mathematics has improved year on year. In 2007 the proportion of A*-C grades improved in almost all GCSE subjects, but there is still considerable variation in the performance of different subjects. Pass rates at A*-C remain well below the national average in almost half of these subjects. The school's self-evaluation acknowledges that there is more work to do to increase the consistency of performance between subjects, to raise standards further. There are no significant differences in the performance of different groups within the school. Students with learning difficulties make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Personal development and wellbeing are good. Students enjoy school; attendance is good and more students are staying on in the sixth form. Behaviour is usually good and students get on well with adults in school and each other. They explained that bullying is rare and they do not experience racist incidents. One student said 'we don't bully each other, we want to get on'. Students say they feel safe and well supported.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a clear sense of fairness and respect for different opinions and religions, as seen in a good whole school assembly. The school's inclusive ethos supports a vibrant cultural awareness, which caters for the ethnic and cultural mix of the school.

Students participate in the student council and feel that the leadership listens to and acts on their views. For example, they have been involved in the recruitment of staff and in the design of the new buildings. They make a good contribution to the community, and raise money for charities and support a school in Uganda. Students understand what is necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Healthy eating options are available at school and many participate regularly in sports activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff development and support for teachers is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching. In most lessons, students are well taught, expectations are realistic and the students respond well and with enthusiasm. This is helping them to make good progress. In the best lessons, teachers managed the lesson very well, keeping up a brisk pace so that students were stretched to achieve as much as they could. However, in a few lessons observed there were insufficient resources or strategies to meet the full range of students' abilities and more able students were not fully engaged or challenged by the work.

Teachers are keen for the students to do well and planning is usually thorough, although there is not always sufficient focus on what students are expected to learn. In a few lessons observed some valuable learning time was lost because students drifted into lessons and those who were there on time simply sat around waiting for latecomers to arrive. The quality and regularity of

homework and marking varies between subjects and teachers. The monitoring of this is not yet consistent across departments. Students in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form had a better understanding of their targets than those in Years 7 to 9.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of students well. The school reviews the curriculum regularly and good plans are in place for changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum from September 2008.

Students in Years 10 and 11 can choose different options to suit their needs and interests. Higher attaining students can pursue a more traditional curriculum; those with more practical aptitudes are offered an expanding range of vocational GCSEs. Students who are disaffected, or who struggle with more traditional programmes, can take courses in basic skills, and engineering, construction and hairdressing courses are offered through the Windsor Skills Centre. The school is rightly proud of the way it has successfully developed its curriculum to meet needs but acknowledges that further improvements can be made, for example by extending the range of on-site vocational courses.

Specialist business and enterprise college status is having a good impact on the work of the school. Enterprise weeks encourage staff and students in all subjects to think in different ways about what is being taught and studied. For example, in the 'Let's Cook' project Year 10 students organised a Christmas party for some local senior citizens where the catering was linked to healthy eating. The curriculum is enriched through business partnerships, where the students are set real business or commercial problems to tackle, and by mini enterprises such as the allotment scheme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care guidance and support are good, and the range of extended services provides good additional support for students, including well-attended after-school homework and youth clubs. Learning support assistants and heads of year know their students well and monitor closely their academic and personal achievements. Individual concerns are quickly identified and appropriate action is taken.

The school has a good intervention programme for the support of students with emotional and behavioural needs, and those with learning difficulties. For example, the school's inclusion centre regularly monitors students' progress in reading. Support for vulnerable students is also very strong with robust links between the school and external agencies. The effective referral and inclusion centre is well organised and successfully supports those students at risk of exclusion. Exclusion rates are low.

The arrangements for child protection are thorough and the school shows a high level of care to ensure the health and safety of its students especially during the current building work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff and governors know the school well and understand its strengths and weaknesses. Realistic and challenging targets are set with governors and this has raised expectations of staff and students. Middle and senior leaders are clear about their roles in reviewing and assessing standards. The school recognises the need to be more rigorous in the scrutiny of students' work.

Self-evaluation is effective in identifying areas for improvement. Subject evaluations are comprehensive and detailed but could be further improved by greater consistency in how achievement data is analysed. There is currently insufficient focus in self-evaluation and improvement plans on those issues that affect learning within lessons. The school acknowledges that leaders at all levels need to focus more sharply on the use of strategies to improve teaching and learning and raise achievement. These include setting clear learning objectives, meeting individual needs and assessment for learning.

The leadership group provide good support to teachers and subject areas to raise standards further, and make very effective use of excellent partnerships to support this. The current major building project is well managed and will bring significantly improve accommodation and facilities. Financial management is good and the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	2
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	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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	2	

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?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	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

13 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Slough and Eton CE Business and Enterprise College, Slough, SL1 2PU

On behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently, I would like say how much we enjoyed meeting and talking to you, in your lessons and around the school. Many of you and your parents spoke very positively about the school. We have taken these views in to account in arriving at our judgement that Slough and Eton is a good school with some outstanding aspects and that the majority of you are making good progress.

You develop good personal and social skills while at school. We were impressed by the way all the different groups of students get along with each other and how you show respect and consideration for different cultures and beliefs. Attendance and behaviour are good. Most of you participate well in lessons and enjoy your work. However, not all of you turn up to lessons on time and this affects everyone in the class by wasting time and slowing down the start of the lesson. If all students were punctual, this would give a lot more time to get things done.

Many of you told us that you feel safe and well supported. Your teachers and support staff know you well, and work hard to help you make as much progress as you can. The school has developed some outstanding partnerships to support students and to help to raise standards further. This includes both business and education partners and there are some excellent opportunities for you to develop enterprise and organisational skills and work with other schools. There are good opportunities for you to take traditional and vocational courses, depending on your interests and abilities.

We have asked the school to work on improving the quality of all teaching to that of the best and that the work set matches the needs of all students. The school knows that it needs to make sure that the quality of homework and marking is more consistent between different subjects and teachers, so it can help you to learn better. We have asked senior and middle managers to put more emphasis on teaching and learning, especially learning, throughout the school, when they review subjects and performance. We think this will help to make sure you do equally well in all your subjects.

Your headteacher and senior managers have high aspirations for the school's future. Your teachers are committed to improving the school further to give you all the best opportunities possible to do well. We have confidence that the school will continue to improve and that you will all do your bit to make it a success.

With best wishes for the future

Janet Mercer

Her Majesty's Inspector