

Cullompton Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113502
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311299
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Massey 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	626
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vivien Healy
Headteacher	Cara Dunne
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Exeter Road Cullompton EX15 1DX
Telephone number	01884 33364
Fax number	01884 38307

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated a range of issues identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection: • the quality of feedback and guidance to students • the management of provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities • the use of data by staff in order to raise achievement • the provision of a curriculum well matched to students' needs • Students' behaviour, both in and out of lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been indicated where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Cullompton Community College serves the small town of Cullompton and surrounding villages. The majority of students are White British and very few students arrive at the school in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is slightly greater than the national average. The school became a specialist business and enterprise college in 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Cullompton Community College is a satisfactory school with some good features. One parent wrote, 'My daughter has thrived at Cullompton. Her self-esteem and confidence have increased greatly since starting there.' Others described the prompt, caring and helpful response of staff to their concerns, and the 'seamless' transition from primary school. Students are self-assured and polite and the atmosphere in corridors and around the school is calm. They say they feel safe and that they enjoy school. Improved attendance over the last year is a result of very clear and consistent systems for following up absence. All staff are well trained in child protection procedures and risk assessments are thorough. Care, support and both personal and academic guidance are good. To support students further the school has established a new learning support unit and employs non-teaching staff with the time to support and listen to those who are having difficulties and help sort out problems. Systems for managing poor behaviour are robust. There is little bullying and when it does occur the school deals with it effectively. Students' moral and social development is good and the school is working hard to develop awareness of cultural issues. The recent 'Day of Difference' organised for Year 9 students as part of business and enterprise specialist status had a dramatic impact on students' perceptions and understanding of Britain's multicultural diversity. Achievement is satisfactory overall because students arrive at the school with average attainment and leave with GCSE results that are close to the national average. In English achievement has been consistently good for several years, especially for boys at the highest grades in 2007, although there was a slight dip in the results of tests at the end of Year 9. Attainment in science has also been consistently above the national average but fell slightly in 2007. Over the last three years progress and attainment in mathematics have been weaker and there was a significant fall in 2007. With carefully tailored support, girls arriving at the school with reading difficulties make particularly good progress. Although boys do well initially in their reading, their progress is not always sustained and they then find learning in other subjects difficult. Most students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and some make good progress. The progress made by students is linked closely to the quality of teaching and learning. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there is much that is good and some that is outstanding. In English, for example, lessons are well planned and provide a wide variety of activities. Students enjoy their learning and behave well because good teaching makes lessons interesting, stimulating and sufficiently challenging for all students. Consequently, they take a pride in their work, make good progress and achieve well. Where teaching is less inspiring, behaviour deteriorates because students become bored. This is an issue for both parents and students, who are rightly concerned that some students sometimes disrupt the learning of others. Learning is most effective when teachers provide constructive advice, both verbally and through marking, quickly after work is completed, so students know exactly what they need to do in order to improve. This is the case in some subjects, such as English, history, art and business studies, but the quality of this feedback is not consistent throughout the school. Work is not always well matched to students' individual needs. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and work well on their own initiative to provide support for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in lessons, but teachers do not always provide work that is appropriate for these students or give sufficient guidance for support staff. Information about the best strategies to use to support individual students is available but is not in a format that makes it easy for staff to implement them. The curriculum for Years 10 and 11 has improved substantially since the time of the last inspection and is now good. Physical education is a particular strength with all students following

a certificated course at GCSE and over half of them taking part in some extra-curricular activity. Some students make a positive contribution to the community by helping in local primary schools as part of the Junior Sports Leader awards. Strong links with other schools and local colleges allow students to choose from a wide range of vocational courses, which are both motivating for students and appropriate to local needs. Year 10 students are very much enjoying the recently introduced construction course. Business and enterprise status has strengthened links with local employers and some make a valuable contribution to enterprise days, which are organised for all year groups. Year 11 students, for example, really valued a day spent off site, which helped them develop skills that will be useful as they transfer on to further education or employment. The school is aware that some students have low aspirations and is promoting a range of strategies to raise their ambition and self-confidence. The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, supported by an energetic and competent leadership team, is working hard to improve not only the quality of teaching but also that of learning. A recent focus on developing independent learning skills for Year 7 students through the Building Learning Power programme is already having an impact. Thorough analysis of data and training for staff enable them to use data to improve achievement much more effectively than at the time of the last inspection. The response of senior leaders and governors to the dip in performance in 2007 has been both swift and robust. Comprehensive action plans are in place to put achievement back on track and these are already having a substantial impact in English and science, and a more limited impact in mathematics. However, difficulties in timetabling as a result of a relatively high proportion of permanent part-time staff are having an impact on both the curriculum and achievement. There have been particular problems with recruitment and retention of teachers in the mathematics department. Senior leaders know the school well. Their self-evaluation is thorough and leads to effective and appropriate long-term strategic planning. For example, the development of the learning support centre and very effective collaboration with other schools has been in response to concerns about behaviour and both initiatives have already improved provision for students. Middle managers have the autonomy to act to improve achievement within their own departments and feel that they are accountable for the outcomes. Current progress in raising standards, managing behaviour and improving attendance indicates that the school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is sufficiently stimulating, interesting and well matched to students' needs to engage students of all abilities and aspirations, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the consistency of feedback to students so they know exactly what they need to do in each subject in order to improve. A small proportion of the schools whose overall 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.

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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
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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
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

14 March 2008 Dear Students Inspection of Cullompton Community College, Cullompton, EX15 1DX You will remember when I recently came to inspect your school. I would like to thank those of you who talked to me and told me about the strengths of your school and those things that need to be improved. I found you very honest, open and helpful. In return I would like to tell you about my findings. Cullompton Community College is a satisfactory school that gives you good care, guidance and support and a good curriculum. Business and enterprise specialist status provides good links with local employers and allows the school to put on the enterprise days that many of you said you enjoyed and found interesting. The links with East Devon and Bicton Colleges and other local schools mean that you can choose a wide range of courses in Years 10 and 11. The standards you achieve at GCSE and Key Stage 3 are in line with the national average. I found that although teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, much is good and some is outstanding. Some of you told me that you were concerned about disruption to some lessons by the poor behaviour of some students. When teachers make the lessons interesting, stimulating and well matched to your needs, then not only do you enjoy learning but you also behave well and make good progress. I have asked the school to make sure that the quality of teaching and learning improves so that all lessons are as good as the best. I have also asked them to make sure that the feedback you receive about your work is helpful so that you know exactly what you need to do in each subject in order to improve. You can help by making sure that you concentrate hard in lessons and act on the advice you are given. The headteacher and other senior leaders in the school work very hard and have been very quick to put into place plans for improvement after a dip in examination results last year. Already there is evidence that they will be better in 2008. I wish you all well for the future. Mary Massey HMI

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