

Budmouth Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113902
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311424
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Townsend HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1592
6th form	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rose Bruce
Headteacher	David Akers
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2004
School address	Chickerell Road Weymouth DT4 9SY
Telephone number	01305 830500
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Age group	11-19
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Budmouth Technology College is much larger than most secondary schools. It specialises in technology. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There is a specialist base at the college for students with Asperger's Syndrome. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The number of students from minority ethnic groups is low.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Budmouth Technology College is a good school. The college has an accurate view, overall, of its strengths and weaknesses as reflected in its own evaluation of performance and effectiveness. Nevertheless, inspectors also found that some aspects of its performance are outstanding. A dynamic principal leads the college with able support from a strong leadership team and governing body. Excellent partnerships with parents, external agencies and an unusually wide range of other providers contribute significantly to the college's effectiveness. The college enjoys the full support of parents and students alike who recognise that college staff put their needs at the heart of everything the college does. The principal has inspired his team to share his inclusive vision and make the improvements seen since the last inspection.

The GCSE examination results have been consistently above average and are now rising further after a dip in 2007. After a period of staffing difficulties, which led to the average standards seen in the 2007 Key Stage 3 tests, leaders have taken decisive action to improve teaching and learning. Achievement is now good in both key stages. The college has set targets that are more challenging for students this year and they are making good progress towards them. However, expectations of what students can achieve are still not high enough to secure the more rapid progress over time needed to deliver outstanding achievement. To that end, systems for tracking and analysing students' progress remain under-developed.

Students receive exceptional levels of pastoral care and support for their personal development, which is outstanding. Their behaviour is excellent, as is their commitment to living healthily, keeping safe and to making a significant contribution to life within and beyond the college community. The exemplary curriculum is diverse and well matched to the needs, aptitudes and interests of individual students. Its status as a technology college has enabled Budmouth to offer an outstanding range of courses in mathematics, design and technology, and the sciences. An impressive array of extra-curricular activities is on offer.

Advanced skills teachers have been at the forefront of innovative staff development work to improve classroom practices. As a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching, students make good progress in their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support to individual students in class and they respond with positive attitudes to learning. There are enhanced levels of challenge and student engagement in the most effective lessons. However, inconsistencies exist in the quality of marking, assessment and feedback to students about their progress.

The college looks forward with confidence. It has shown it can secure marked improvements to the quality of provision and sustain the level of outcomes seen in terms of students' personal development. Leadership is now strong at all levels within the organisation. Inspectors therefore judge that leaders have excellent capacity to achieve the college's ambitions.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The college has an effective sixth form that promotes good achievement along with excellent personal development. The very broad curriculum is highly inclusive. Under the excellent direction of the leader of the sixth form, the provision is continually evolving and being adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of students. By guiding students to choose their courses wisely, to accept challenges and to try new experiences, the college ensures these students

become well-rounded individuals, with an ambition and drive to succeed. The care and guidance that the students receive in support of their academic and personal development are outstanding and the students agree. They also feel that they play an important part in shaping the direction the college takes and in its excellent relationships with the surrounding community.

The effective leadership team focuses well on raising achievement by involving staff and students alike in monitoring progress and improving standards. A thorough analysis of examination performance, classroom practices and assessment procedures has led to improvements in teaching and learning that are having a positive effect, although their full effect has not yet been seen. Current standards are average, but represent a marked improvement on the 2007 results, and students make good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rigour of systems for tracking and analysing the students' progress towards the challenging targets that are now being set for them.
- Ensure greater consistency in the application of college policies in relation to marking and use of assessment in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students at the college, including those with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities achieve well from broadly average starting points. Most vulnerable groups achieve very well, such as the students within the college's specialist base for learners with Asperger's Syndrome, children looked after by the local authority and students who follow the Learn4Work curriculum and acquire alternative Level 2 qualifications. There are no significant differences between the progress made by other groups of learners.

The progress made by students who took the Key Stage 3 national tests a year early has been disappointing for the college in the last two years. In 2007, although the mathematics results were above average and progress rates were good, the standards reached in English and science were only average and progress was satisfactory. The college has acted swiftly to analyse the reasons for that relatively weaker performance. It has taken effective steps to strengthen leadership and teaching in these departments, and now plans for students to take all the national tests in Year 9, when they have had more time to cover the curriculum in greater depth and have reached the full levels of maturity required to perform at their best. Checks on current achievement in Year 9 indicate that students are on now on target to make good progress. Students make good progress across the range of subjects in Years 10 and 11. In 2007, progress in English was good and satisfactory in mathematics. Standards over time are above average and look set to rise further in 2008. In 2007, over half of students gained five or more higher GCSE grades that included English and mathematics. Standards across subjects were above average overall in 2007, with the specialist subjects, including design and technology, making a marked contribution to this positive picture on attainment. The proportion of students who reach the highest grades of A* and A, although broadly average overall in 2007, is set to increase. However, whilst standards continue to rise, achievement is good rather than outstanding because some students still do not make the accelerated progress of which they are capable

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The inspection team agrees with the college's own evaluation that students' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, are outstanding.

Students thoroughly enjoy their education at the college and, as a result, levels of attendance are above average. They are extremely proud and pleased to be at Budmouth. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to achieve well in lessons. Relationships with staff are warm because of the extremely high quality care and support provided. Students are exceptionally courteous to outside visitors and make excellent ambassadors for the college. They appreciate the benefit of leading a healthy lifestyle, choosing healthy foods at lunchtime and participating enthusiastically in extra-curricular sport and adventure activity.

Students say they feel very safe and that, even though bullying is not an issue at the college, they would know to whom to turn if they were to need help. Behaviour in class and around the college is excellent. Many students contribute enthusiastically to the college community and outside. For example, the democratically elected college council has successfully addressed issues raised by the student body. Other groups, for example the 'Action Team', take on projects such as the anti-litter campaign, and others train to take on the role as peer mentors and mediators. Many students contribute to enhancing college life through participation in sports, music and drama activities and have gained commendation for their involvement in community events across the town.

Students gain excellent skills for the next stage of education and the workplace. They benefit greatly from the very effective work-related learning opportunities and its citizenship programme, which has been much improved since the last inspection. They develop skills in teamwork, leadership and independence often through the wide range of enrichment activities. They are given and utilise well opportunities to apply their basic skills in information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Effective teaching leads to students who are typically engaged in their work, very well behaved and good at working with each other. The support provided by teachers and teaching assistants for all students is strong. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in these lessons. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers show passion for their subject and impart that enthusiasm to the students. They use very good subject knowledge and a range of teaching and learning styles to set students challenging work and move learning forward at a more rapid rate. In some lessons seen, the pace of learning was slower and style of learning was less collaborative and too teacher-led, with the learning objectives or outcomes not clear to the students. Across the college, the use of assessment in lessons is too variable. Whilst

there are some good examples of teachers promoting student self-assessment, in many classes, marking is cursory or non-existent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The breadth and quality of curriculum is exemplary. Students greatly appreciate the increasingly personalised pathways. The two-year Key Stage 3 programme allows an innovative and extensive range of options to be available in Year 9. As a technology college, Budmouth offers an outstanding range of both academic and vocational courses in the specialist subjects. Vocational courses benefit greatly from the close links with both college and work-based settings. Partnerships with employers enable students to have positive and productive work placements, which lead to employment and/or apprenticeships. The college is poised to offer all the new 14–19 diplomas from September. There is outstanding provision for students on the Learn4Work programme. The extremely well supported extra-curricular activities to enrich and extend students' learning are outstanding in their variety and quality.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The outstanding care and support for all students makes Budmouth a very inclusive college. Tutors and pastoral leaders provide very high quality support for students' welfare. The trained student peer mentors and mediators provide excellent support, and a special centre, 'the Zone', ensures ready access is available at all times. A particular strength is the success of the college's liaison with outside agencies and the very good links with parents. The more vulnerable, including students with Asperger's Syndrome who attend the college's specialist base, receive excellent support. There is very good support available from the full-time college counsellor for students with significant personal issues. Arrangements for risk assessments, safeguarding students and medical support are robust, as are child protection procedures. Academic support and guidance is good. Careers and options guidance is very well organised. This year, the college has extended its mentoring programme, through which an assigned tutor reviews with each student their progress against both personal and academic targets. Students and their parents really value the support provided. However, whilst the academic targets set this year are more challenging, this has not always been so for some individual students.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The principal has evolved very effective structures for leaders across the college to work in teams and, as a consequence, leadership is excellent. These teams have worked innovatively to drive forward improvements to the quality of provision since the last inspection, including the impressive curriculum for personalised learning and high quality provision for students' personal development. Outstanding teachers are leading a unique programme of professional development, coaching and mentoring with colleagues, and are driving through improvements

to teaching and learning across the college. The college's self-evaluation is accurate. The increasing involvement in this process of the new middle leaders has successfully enabled the college to reduce the impact of pivotal staff leaving the college and previous weaknesses in subject leadership. Inspectors cannot judge leadership and management to be outstanding because, whilst monitoring and evaluation are typically at least good, relative weaknesses remain in the analysis of students' progress. The college has recognised that, until recently, its targets for students have not always been grounded in detailed analysis of progress rates or sufficiently challenging. This has led to some students making less than expected progress. More demanding targets are now in place for year groups and standards are rising. However, systems to track and analyse students' progress, periodically review the accuracy of targets and give early warning of any potential underachievement remain underdeveloped. Governors work very closely with managers to remedy shortcomings and use comprehensive systems for monitoring and evaluating the college's performance. They play an exemplary role in capturing and listening to the needs of the community.

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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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
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?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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?	2	2
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 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	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

Dear Students

Inspection of Budmouth Technology College, Weymouth, DT4 9SY

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we made about your college. Thank you for making us welcome and for taking the time to talk to us so politely. We would like to record our gratitude to the Year 10 students who were our guides to the campus during our visit and who acted as true ambassadors for the college.

- We believe that your college and its sixth form is good with some excellent features
- GCSE results are above average and rising. You now make good progress across all year groups from Year 7 to 13.
- You particularly enjoy life at the college and rightly feel it develops you very well as rounded individuals. The level of pastoral care you receive is first rate.
- Teaching and learning across the college and the sixth form are good and some lessons are particularly effective.
- You relish the opportunities afforded by the extensive and flexible curriculum on offer and especially appreciate the extra-curricular programme and the courses and facilities brought about through the college's technology status.
- You behave very well both within and beyond lessons.
- The principal leads the college very well and has a strong team of leaders and governors to support him in his work.

We think that your college needs to:

- Make sure it monitors your progress towards challenging targets more closely.
- Ensure that teachers are following the same approach to the marking and assessing of your work.

You can help by continuing to show the very positive attitudes towards work that we saw during our visit.

With best wishes

David Townsend Her Majesty's Inspector



22 May 2008

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