

Claverham Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114584
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311652
Inspection date	18 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline White 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vacant Position
Headteacher	Richard Pitts
Date of previous school inspection	23 November 2004
School address	North Trade Road Battle TN33 0HT
Telephone number	01424 772155
Fax number	01424 774106

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the college and investigated the following issues: whether all students achieve as well as they can, especially in English; the effectiveness of systems for tracking students' progress; and whether the curriculum meets the needs of students. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the principal, staff, students and governors. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of students' work were examined and, in addition, college information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the college's work were not investigated in detail.

Description of the school

This large college has achieved specialist status in sport and information and communication technology (ICT). It is a training school and offers extended services to its community, including a nursery and adult education courses. The social and economic circumstances of families are mixed. The take-up for free school meals is below average. Most students are of White British heritage and a very small minority speak a language other than English as their first language. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the number of students with a statement of special educational needs. A special facility provides for students with hearing impairments.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This excellent college is a settled and vibrant place of learning that ensures outstanding outcomes for most students. There are many reasons why the college is successful. The most significant is a determined commitment to high expectations and the development of every individual. As a result, very positive attitudes pervade and manifest in warm relationships between all members of the college community. Students enter the college with just-above-average attainment. The great majority make excellent progress to achieve very high standards at the end of key stages. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the college and appreciative of the extended services it offers. Amongst the many very positive comments, one reported: 'I have had connections with the school for over 13 years. In that time, I have witnessed the progress, happiness and building of solid foundations to enable my children to achieve their goals.'

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers and support staff are clearly focused on raising students' achievement. They have a good rapport with students, based on effective discipline, trust and a commitment to the success of every child. Good assessment and tracking procedures ensure students receive the right amount of challenge or support. A close check is kept on the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson observations, scrutiny of students' work and a thorough evaluation of test and examination results are used to identify effective practice and what needs to improve. The college is ambitious to lift the good but more variable performance of some subject areas, particularly English, to the consistently excellent standard of other subjects. Sound strategies are being implemented to achieve this.

The excellent curriculum caters well for the needs of students. The college is developing courses and skills that will enable them to rise to the challenge of the future. The college's specialisms in sport and ICT have been instrumental in driving curriculum development. The thoughtful balance of academic and vocational courses gives students breadth of opportunity and the wide variety of activities both in and out of college enriches their experiences. Participation rates are high, with many students benefiting from sporting activities, trips, clubs and societies. There is very good provision for careers education, work experience and work-related learning. As a result, students' self-confidence, enterprise and financial skills are developing very well. The extended services available increase community involvement and promote engagement with life-long learning.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding features of the college. Students thoroughly enjoy learning and college life. They speak convincingly of the ways in which they support each other. This commitment is evident in the strength of relationships, excellent behaviour and good attendance. Students are clear and conscientious about issues of safety and have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. They take their personal responsibility for self-improvement very seriously and make an important contribution to the well-being of others in the wider community through fund-raising activities and caring for the environment. They also play a significant part in the ongoing development of the college through the college council.

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is outstanding. Students know they are valued and develop a deep sense of belonging and pride in the college. The pastoral support extended through the well-established house system is excellent. This is a highly inclusive

community where every student is helped as much as possible. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities play a full part in lessons and achieve as well as their classmates. All aspects of child protection and health and safety procedures are secure.

Overall, leadership and management are excellent. The clear and resolute leadership of the principal gives strong direction to the work of the school. He is well supported by a talented and hardworking senior team. Together, they ensure there is a shared vision, placing the needs of students at the heart of decision making. Excellent teamwork among staff and governors sustains the momentum for continuous improvement. Self-evaluation is well founded and used effectively to raise students' achievement. The professional development of all staff is given a high priority, with an emphasis on building leadership skills at all levels. Whilst the quality of subject leadership is at least good, the college has set its sights on consistently excellent performance.

Governors are involved in the life of the college, well informed about plans for improvement and effective in supporting and challenging those charged with responsibility for implementation. The college successfully tackled the issues identified in its previous inspection and has excellent capacity to continue improving.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Lift the performance of some subject teams, and especially English, to that of the most successful by continuing to share and learn from existing best practice.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

The quality of provision

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

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19 September 2007

Dear Students,

Inspection of Claverham Community College, Battle, East Sussex TN33 0HT

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your college recently. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated your openness and cooperation. This letter summarises the findings of our inspection. Your parents or carers will have a copy of the full report, should you wish to read it.

The inspection found that yours is an outstanding college. You really enjoy college life and the well-planned lessons that help you to achieve consistently high standards in national tests and examinations. There is an excellent range of courses available to you, with a wide choice of extra activities to help you develop as well-rounded, confident young people with very good life opportunities.

Relationships between you are strong and you say you feel safe and valued. Staff and governors put you first and ensure you have excellent care and support. Your teachers keep a close eye on how you are doing so that those of you who need extra help or harder work get it. The college is very well led and is always striving to improve. One of the things leaders will be focusing on is ensuring you perform to the highest standard possible in all subjects.

You play a powerful part in making the school a purposeful and successful place. You take your work seriously and behave very well. We were impressed with your willingness to take responsibility and to be helpful. You make an important contribution to the well-being of others in the wider community through your fund-raising activities and care for the environment. Keep up the excellent work!

With very best wishes for the future,

Jacqueline White Her Majesty's Inspector



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