

Tollbar Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118091
Local Authority	North East Lincolnshire
Inspection number	312808
Inspection dates	2–3 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela M Headon HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	2052
6th form	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Bond
Headteacher	Mr D J Hampson
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Station Road New Waltham Grimsby N E Lincolnshire DN36 4RZ
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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

Tollbar Business and Enterprise College is a large 11–19 foundation school situated to the south of Grimsby. The number of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average figure. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The college has achieved a number of awards including the Financial Management Standard, Healthy Schools and Investors in People status. The college achieved specialist business and enterprise status in 2002 and was re-designated with a second specialism, humanities, in 2006. The college has established joint sixth form provision with Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Tollbar Business and Enterprise College is an outstanding college that provides excellent value for money. Students are provided with a first-rate education and the highest level of care, guidance and support. Parents recognise this and are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the college. The college sets very clear and high expectations, which are known and respected throughout the college community. Students' overall academic performance is outstanding.

Students' achievements, particularly at Key Stage 4, are impressive, given their starting points, and have been sustained over a number of years. In 2007, the college's GCSE results continued to increase across all performance measures and standards overall were exceptionally high. At Key Stage 3, standards are above average overall. However, there is no room for complacency. The college recognises the need to strengthen performance in all subjects at Key Stage 3 to ensure excellent results in both key stages.

Students have very positive attitudes to learning and to their college, which is reflected in their excellent attendance. All aspects of their personal development are outstanding and contribute significantly to their high levels of achievement.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and continuing to improve further. Teachers set high expectations and work hard to ensure that lessons are effective and students achieve well. Students are very well supported and understand what they have to do to achieve their challenging academic targets. The college fully recognises the abilities of all its students and overall, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Through rigorous lesson monitoring and well targeted training, the college continues to improve upon satisfactory practice in order to secure consistently high quality teaching.

The outstanding curriculum reflects the college's specialist status, with a clear focus on students attaining qualifications to secure their future economic well-being. An innovative approach to Key Stage 3 and a well-focused programme with relevant pathways for students of all abilities at Key Stage 4 are key features. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance provision is excellent. Strong links with business and local educational institutions provide further opportunities for students to develop personal and academic success.

The exceptional leadership of the principal, ably supported by a highly effective team of senior leaders, has resulted in a shared vision of success that relentlessly drives the college forward. This is wholly supported by all personnel and there is a strong sense of teamwork across the college. Governors offer excellent support and challenge and are fully aware of where the college can improve further.

Self-evaluation is outstanding. Lesson monitoring, subject reviews and analysis of students' performance all contribute to the self-critical culture within the college, where there is always scope for improvement. This ethos of excellence and continuous improvement together with the high achievement of students creates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the college's judgement that the effectiveness of the sixth form is good. Students achieve well and standards are above average. Students make good progress at both

A level and AS level, on a range of courses well-suited to their needs. Excellent performance in English, mathematics, business studies and general studies is evident.

The care, support and guidance students receive are outstanding and impact strongly on their personal development and academic achievement. Students speak in glowing terms of the help and support they are offered. Students value both the curricular and enrichment opportunities presented to them during their time in the sixth form.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. This, together with challenging targets and focused individual monitoring of attainment, impacts significantly on achievement. Teaching styles used in the sixth form also ensure that students are well prepared for the demands and expectations of higher education.

The college continues to work hard to ensure its curriculum allows students to achieve well. It presently works in partnership with a neighbouring college to successfully extend provision and is set to introduce an International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) in September 2008.

The sixth form is well led and managed and leaders are actively focused on all aspects of its work. They know exactly what is required to further maximise students' performance and continue to prepare students well for future employment or higher education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that standards and achievement are strengthened at Key Stage 3, with a focus on higher ability students.
- Maintain the focus on teaching and learning to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching across the college.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students' achievement and standards are excellent overall. Students enter the college having achieved broadly average results in their primary schools and they leave with exceptionally high standards. In particular, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress.

At Key Stage 4, the college's examination results in 2007 continued to improve across all performance measures. GCSE results were impressive, with three out of every four students gaining five or more grades at C or above, including English and mathematics. Standards in English and mathematics overall were significantly above the national average. The proportion of students gaining the highest GCSE grades A* and A, also continued to rise.

At Key Stage 3, standards overall improved in 2007 and test results at expected and higher levels in English and science increased, after a slight decline in 2006. The college recognises, however, that students make better progress during Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3 and that across all subjects, attainment at the highest levels is less marked. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that strategies to address this difference are beginning to have an impact.

The college sets challenging targets, which are regularly revised. The use of rigorous tracking procedures ensures teachers, students and parents are well informed about the progress students make across the college. This, together with effective mentoring and early examination entry for selected students contributes extremely well to students' high level of achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development is outstanding. Emphasis on mutual respect makes a strong impact. This, and the drive to achieve as well as they can, whatever their starting points, especially at GCSE, sums up everything the college stands for. A parent wrote, 'At Tollbar, every child really does matter.'

Students have very positive attitudes to college and to their work. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit significantly from the meticulous attention given to their needs. Behaviour in the classrooms and around the college is usually excellent and attendance is well above average. This is a strong indication of students' enjoyment and of the college's determined efforts to ensure that no student will miss their education. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall as a result of systematic attention to this aspect throughout the curriculum.

Students report that they feel safe at college and understand the need to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They are keen to make their views known and they feel they influence how the college is run, through the student council. The 'Young Enterprise' scheme, where students run their own business, is one of the many excellent ways in which they benefit from the college's specialist status which prepares them well for their future. The high standards achieved in basic skills complete the outstanding picture.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, continues to improve and contributes well to students' achievements throughout the college. Students are keen to learn and their positive attitudes contribute very well to the strong learning ethos which characterises the majority of lessons. This ensures that students continue to make good progress even when the teaching is less effective.

There is a common format for lesson planning which teachers use well. In the majority of lessons, teachers provide students with a variety of activities and use prior attainment information to ensure that the challenge is right for all students within the class. Learning objectives are clearly understood by students and progress towards them monitored during, as well as at the conclusion of, the lesson. The use of skilled questioning to clarify and assess students' understanding is a key feature. Students enjoy these lessons and make good progress towards their target grades and levels. This best practice, however, is not yet wholly consistent across all subjects.

The college continues to place a strong emphasis on improving practice to ensure that all lessons are consistently good or better. Teachers generally appreciate the positive impact of the college's rigorous system of lesson monitoring as they are keen to improve the quality of their work and recognise that they will be well supported with appropriate professional training.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college provides an outstanding curriculum for its students. The emphasis is firmly on enabling all to succeed and to meet the challenges of working life in a competitive and rapidly changing world. In this respect, it is carefully monitored to ensure it meets the needs, interests and ambitions of all its students.

A key feature is the two year Key Stage 3 curriculum, recently introduced to maximise and accelerate progress in both key stages. This is fully supported by students, parents and teachers and early indications are that this bold move is already having some success.

The impact of the business and enterprise specialism and more recently humanities is keenly felt across the college in both key stages. There is a strong emphasis on key employability skills in all areas of the curriculum, including basic skills in literacy and numeracy, which is reflected in the carefully considered programme at Key Stage 4. The application of ICT to promote students' independence and progress in all areas of the curriculum is also a major strength.

A comprehensive programme of citizenship and personal, social and health education also contributes very well to students' personal development. Students value and enjoy the wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities offered, including sport, music and foreign visits which complement the timetabled curriculum.

A highly personalised careers guidance programme and full participation in work experience ensures that students are well prepared to enter the next stage of education or working life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The care, guidance and support that students receive are outstanding and the college knows its students very well as individuals.

Students have confidence that college staff will act quickly to help them with both personal and academic needs and this view is well supported by parents. House tutors and subject teachers ensure that students benefit fully from all that the college has to offer.

The rigorous monitoring of academic progress is very effective and is well understood by students. Systems for supporting vulnerable students are comprehensive and there are excellent links with outside agencies and medical professionals. Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. The learning support unit offers good support for those who are unable to fully engage with learning in the classroom.

Students receive very good advice, guidance and support at points of transition, which they appreciate. Induction procedures are thorough and help Year 7 students integrate confidently. All personnel have received training on child protection procedures and statutory safeguarding checks are fully in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 2

The leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The principal has a focused agenda for continuous improvement which is wholly shared by senior leaders, curriculum leaders and all staff who are fully committed to improving student performance. His strong and skilful leadership promotes an ethos of inclusion and achievement, where the success of every child really does matter.

The college is fully aware of its strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Systems of self-evaluation are rigorous, well established and subject to very regular review. These take account of the views of all stakeholders, including parents. Focused meetings between senior and curriculum leaders provide excellent opportunities to assess subject and student performance. Through this process curriculum leaders are well supported and feel empowered yet fully accountable in their leadership role.

There is a strong commitment to continually improve the quality of teaching and learning and monitoring systems are robust. There is much in place to encourage teachers to develop effective practice. There are very good arrangements for performance management and professional development for all personnel. The college sets challenging targets, which are actively shared with all learners.

The college's specialist status has contributed significantly to the college's success and its performance across the wider curriculum. It has also enhanced partnership working, including work with on-site business, local schools, and colleges. These links are excellent.

The knowledgeable governing body is well informed, actively involved in the life of the college and monitors its performance very effectively. The areas for improvement from the previous inspection have all been successfully addressed.

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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?	1	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?	1	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	2
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 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	1	
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?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	2
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	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	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

4 April 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Tollbar Business and Enterprise College, North East Lincolnshire, DN36 4RZ

Following our visit to your college, we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for speaking to us in lessons, meetings and during social times about your experiences. This proved very helpful.

We are pleased to tell you that your college is outstanding and provides you with an excellent education.

This is a summary of our findings, which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Your college is very well led and managed and is in a strong position to improve further.
- Overall you make outstanding progress during your time at college and achieve excellent GCSE examination results.
- You really enjoy coming to college and appreciate the high level of care, support and guidance you receive.
- The quality of teaching is good and continuing to improve further. Your attitudes to learning are excellent and you work hard.
- You have an outstanding curriculum which is well matched to your needs and aspirations.
- You have a very good quality sixth form.

Although your college is outstanding, we have asked Mr Hampson and the governors to improve your test results further at the end of Year 9 and to ensure that more teaching throughout the college is outstanding.

Thank you again for your help during the inspection. We hope you continue to enjoy your time at the college and wish you all every future success.

Yours sincerely

Angela M Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector