

Fullhurst Community College

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 120298 |
| Local Authority | Leicester City |
| Inspection number | 313578 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 November 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Alan Clamp HMI |

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

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| Type of school | Secondary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–16 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 882 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Debra Gilbert |
| Headteacher | Michael McPherson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 April 2005 |
| School address | Imperial Avenue Leicester LE3 1AH |
| Telephone number | 01162 824326 |
| Fax number | 01162 825781 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Fullhurst Community College is broadly similar in size to other secondary schools nationally. The school serves an area of Leicester City with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is around double the national average. Around 25% of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than average. Approximately 22% of students are from minority ethnic groups, compared with around 17% nationally, and the proportion that do not have English as their first language is also higher than the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress made by students and the standards attained. Standards are very low in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Progress made in Key Stage 4, however, is exceptionally slow and as a result, the overall progress made by students during their time at the school is inadequate. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make satisfactory progress.

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory. Attendance, behaviour and students' attitudes to school have improved since the last inspection. While most students report they feel safe, bullying is a concern for a minority of students and parents, although they recognise that it is generally dealt with effectively by the school. Students generally enjoy school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles but participation in extra-curricular sporting activities is low in Years 10 and 11. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the community through the student council and charity work. The development of economic well-being is inadequate because many students leave the school with relatively low levels of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most lessons are well structured, have clear objectives and incorporate a variety of tasks. Many teachers, however, make insufficient use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the individual needs of all students. Some students' work refers to target grades, and marking gives guidance on how to improve but this is not consistent across subjects. The school has recognised inconsistencies in marking and is now monitoring this more closely. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum and improvements have been made recently, particularly in Year 7 and in Key Stage 4. Students benefit from satisfactory care, guidance and support, and the support provided to the most vulnerable young people is good. The way in which students' academic progress is monitored has improved. The school recognises that it still has more to do to use assessment information in order to plan and target extra support and challenge in the most effective way.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to improve key aspects of students' personal development, but the school has only recently begun to use challenging targets to raise standards. Value for money is inadequate. The school recognises the need to share good practice more effectively, particularly in relation to teaching and learning, self-evaluation and subject leadership. Actions taken in the last year to strengthen teaching, the curriculum, and support and guidance are having a positive impact on students' rates of progress. The capacity of the school to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Urgently address the need to improve the progress made by students, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the individual needs of all students.

- Make more effective use of challenging targets to raise standards.
- Share the good practice evident in some parts of the school to promote improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, self-evaluation and subject leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards are inadequate. Standards are very low. The overall test results in 2006 for Year 9 students were well below the national averages. The standards achieved at the end of Year 9 in 2007 were generally similar to those of the previous year, although there was a slight improvement in the proportion of students attaining Level 5 or above. The proportion of students in Year 11 gaining the equivalent of at least five GCSEs at grades A*–C in 2006 and 2007 was well below the national average. The school has recognised an issue of underachievement by students with particularly low prior attainment and has taken steps to improve the standards reached by these students. The proportion of students achieving the equivalent of five GCSEs at A*–G increased by 12% in 2007 and the proportion achieving at least one qualification was broadly average.

The attainment of students on entry to the school is below average overall and well below average in some year groups. Students make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 3. Progress made in Key Stage 4, however, is exceptionally slow and as a result, the overall progress made by students is inadequate. Moderate improvements in standards are currently predicted by the school for 2008, but a variety of strategies is being employed in order to try to secure more significant improvements. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Attendance, behaviour and students' attitudes to school have improved since the last inspection. School assemblies regularly celebrate students' success in achieving high attendance and high standards of behaviour. The school has worked hard to address issues with attendance but, although satisfactory overall, it remains below the national average. The number of exclusions has reduced and the school is using the learning centre and internal isolation unit effectively to support students with behavioural problems. While most students report they feel safe, bullying is a concern for a minority of students and parents. They do recognise, however, that bullying is generally dealt with well by the school. Students enjoy school when they are engaged by lessons and take an active part in learning. In the less effective lessons, there remains some low level disruption by a minority of students.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school recognises that it needs to develop a broader range of cultural experiences for students and to foster an ethos of working together. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the local community. They make appropriate efforts to lead healthy lifestyles. The economic well-being of students is inadequate because of their relatively underdeveloped key skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons are well structured, have clear objectives and incorporate a variety of tasks. However, plans do not always take into account the starting point of individuals or contain sufficient challenge for more able students. The needs of lower attaining students are generally met well through effective individual support from teachers and teaching assistants. Relationships in lessons are good and behaviour is generally managed well. Students respond positively to opportunities to take an active role in lessons, but too often sessions are dominated by teachers' presentations. The school has recognised that it needs to do more to ensure that students receive detailed and effective advice on how to improve the quality of their work. Individual targets are not always sufficiently challenging in Years 7, 10 or 11, but more challenging targets have been agreed this year with students in Years 8 and 9. Although students make progress that is satisfactory in most lessons, the standards they are working at are frequently below those expected for their age. Monitoring of teaching and learning has identified the main issues to be improved, and contributed to improvements in the quality of lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The curriculum for Year 7 students has been improved this year to address the weak literacy abilities and low confidence levels of many new students. The school has developed a more extensive alternative curriculum for lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 4, developing key skills and including a broad range of accredited practical subjects. Most students in Years 10 and 11 study a vocational option. Some programmes are provided by local further education colleges. Closer monitoring of the off-site provision this year is addressing previous problems of slow progress for many students. The school offers a small number of extra-curricular classes including sport, academic and creative subjects. Participation in these classes, however, is relatively low. Additional enrichment opportunities are available through clubs and societies. Enterprise education is incorporated appropriately into the personal, social and health education programme for all Key Stage 4 students.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory. Staff know students well and work hard to secure their well-being. Procedures for safeguarding students meet current government requirements. Child protection policies are in place and vulnerable students receive well coordinated support from a variety of outside agencies. The overall support for vulnerable students is good. The school works well with its local primary schools in order to manage carefully the transition of students. Students are guided appropriately when making option choices in Year 9, and guidance on education and careers beyond Year 11 is satisfactory. The way in which students' academic progress is monitored has improved. The school recognises that it still has more to do to use the detailed data they have on students' academic progress in order to plan and target extra support, and challenge in the most effective way.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with clear and developing strengths at senior and middle leadership level. The principal has brought drive and energy to the large senior leadership team. The school has an inclusive ethos. It promotes equality of opportunity to ensure that students who are vulnerable and those for whom English is not their first language are able to achieve satisfactorily. Self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses and is based on appropriate levels of monitoring and increasingly rigorous analysis. Effective steps have been taken since the last inspection to improve key aspects of students' personal development, including attendance and behaviour, but the school has only recently begun to address the inadequate progress made by many students. The school improvement plan sets out a clear educational direction, based on suitably challenging targets and an explicit rationale for raising standards and improving students' personal development. Actions taken in the last year to strengthen teaching, the curriculum, and support and guidance are having a positive impact on students' rates of progress. Recent improvements in the collation and use of assessment information and, crucially, in its reliability, have shaped more challenging targets. These are beginning to filter down to staff and to affect classroom practice so that staff have a much clearer picture of the levels of attainment at which students should be working. Well developed links with outside agencies are coordinated effectively to ensure that their impact is properly focused. Considerable external support has been provided by the local authority. This has provided significant challenge and increased the school's leadership capacity. Governors know the school well, understand the challenges that it faces and have provided suitable support and challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards | 4 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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? | Yes |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

15 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Fullhurst Community College, Leicester, LE3 1AH

On behalf of the inspectors who visited Fullhurst Community College on the 14th and 15th November 2007, I would like to thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to share your achievements and talk to you. Many of you helped us find our way around and let us know your views. We think that you might like to know what we think about the school.

What we liked about your school.

- It is an inclusive school that provides good care, guidance and support for the most vulnerable students.
- Attendance and behaviour have improved since the last inspection.
- The curriculum has improved, particularly in Year 7 and Key Stage 4.
- The leaders and managers in the school know what is needed to make further improvements.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Urgently improve the progress you make, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet your individual needs.
- Make more effective use of challenging targets, both for you and for the school as a whole, to raise standards.
- Share the good practice evident in some parts of the school to promote improvements.

Fullhurst Community College has been given a Notice to Improve. This means that it will have another inspection by Ofsted in 12-16 months time to see how well it is doing. You will need to play your part, particularly in terms of the effort you make in lessons and in your own time. We wish you every success.

Best wishes on behalf of the inspection team.

Alan Clamp Her Majesty's Inspector