

# Branston Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120714
<b>Local Authority</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	313725
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Martin Cragg HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1056
6th form	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Wilcox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Beighton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Branston Lincoln Lincolnshire LN4 1LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01522 880400
<b>Fax number</b>	01522 880401

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector in one day.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the college and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement in 2007, the effectiveness of the sixth form, target-setting with students, sharing best practice in teaching and the role of middle managers. Inspectors collected evidence from lesson observations, assessment data, documentation and meetings with key staff, governors and students. Other aspects of the college's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the college's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The college is larger than average and serves Branston and the surrounding area. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. There are few students from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language. The proportion of students with statements of special educational need or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The college became a specialist Business and Enterprise College in 2002. There is a strong programme of extended and community services.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Parents praised the college in their response to the questionnaire. They felt that 'the college has improved immeasurably in recent years' to become 'a well-respected place of study'. Students are 'valued as individuals, rewarded for their achievements' and supported 'through excellent pastoral care to achieve their best'.

The college provides an outstanding quality of education for its students. It has made continuous improvement since its previous inspection through the very clear vision provided by the Principal, senior staff and governors, and which is shared by all staff. Students enter the college with attainment that is broadly average. By the end of Year 9, they achieve standards that are above average. Standards by the end of Year 11 have improved year-on-year and are now well above average across all indicators. Almost all students achieve five or more qualifications at GCSE level and three quarters achieve at least five higher grades. Students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress from their starting points to achieve challenging targets. Staff provide excellent support for those who find learning or organisation difficult to ensure that they achieve well. As a result, the college has reached and surpassed the targets set as part of its Business and Enterprise status.

Students are polite, friendly and have positive attitudes to the college and each other. They have an impressive understanding of different cultures. Behaviour in lessons and around the college is excellent. Students very much appreciate the system of rewards and state that this has played a major role in improving classroom behaviour. Students feel safe. Bullying is rare and students are confident that teachers deal with it effectively. Attendance is excellent and the college has highly effective monitoring procedures. The elected College Council and 'Every Student Matters' group take great pride in their responsibilities. They feel that their suggestions and opinions are listened to and acted upon, reflected in recent changes to the canteen and recycling initiatives. Students have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives and there is a high participation level in physical education (PE) and sports activities. They make positive contributions to the community at large but there are fewer opportunities within the college for students to take responsibility. Work experience, vocational courses and enterprise activities linked to the college's specialist status prepare students well for their future economic well-being.

Parents commented on the 'many fine and enthusiastic teachers' at the college. Senior leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning and it is now outstanding. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons thoroughly, using a good variety of activities. Students enjoy their learning most and thrive where activities are practical and exploratory, ensuring that they gain a full understanding of what they study. Relationships are very strong and students trust their teachers. Assessment is rigorous. Teachers set clear targets for students and review their progress regularly. Students have a very good understanding of what they need to do to improve. Information and communication technology (ICT) and other supported learning programmes are used very effectively to ensure that the vast majority of students make excellent progress. The college has a well-developed ethos of review and improvement. The work of 'learning teams' and the good quality training and support provided to teachers has been instrumental in the successful implementation of new approaches and the continuous improvement of the standard of teaching.

The curriculum is broad, balanced and provides a wide range of opportunities for students. The tutorial and citizenship programmes are a strength. Business and enterprise opportunities throughout the college are excellent and well supported by the diploma award, which encourages high attendance and achievement. The curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 meets the needs of all students and helps them make very good progress. All students follow an enterprise course and gifted or talented students have access to additional subjects and are 'fast-tracked' in others. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides an excellent range of opportunities for students of all abilities, including work related learning and vocational courses. An outstanding range of extra-curricular activities, events and visits complements the curriculum and broadens students' experiences.

Staff support students' individual needs strongly and provide very effective guidance. Very good induction procedures ensure that all Year 7 settle in quickly. There are very effective procedures to identify students who are at risk of underachievement and their progress is closely monitored through a well organised mentoring system. The college works hard to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and to help all to reach their full potential. The arrangements for safeguarding students are excellent. The college follows very good procedures for the protection of children and monitors health and safety issues closely. There are excellent relationships in the college and students feel able to talk with teachers about any of their concerns.

The leadership and management of the college are outstanding. The Principal, senior staff and governors set a very clear vision for the college based on continuous improvement and high achievement for all. There is a strong tradition of self-review. Systems for monitoring the college's performance and evaluating its progress are very effective. Subject and pastoral leaders ensure that the priorities for their areas of responsibility are correctly identified and the excellent challenge and support provided by senior leaders leads to successful implementation of change and improvement. Target-setting for the college and for individual students is based on secure procedures and sets goals in line with the highest achieving schools. In conjunction with the very effective tracking of students' progress and improved teaching, achievement has improved year on year and is now in the top 10% of schools nationally. The college successfully identifies the needs of a wide range of students and meets them effectively. Governors hold the college to account very effectively and know its strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders have tackled the key issues raised at the previous inspection to such an extent that these are now strengths of the college. This is evident, for example, in the tracking of students' progress and provision for students with specific needs. As a result, the college has excellent capacity to improve. Value for money is outstanding.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form provides a satisfactory education for students. They enter with attainment that is just below average. Standards in 2006, although average overall, varied considerably across subjects. Standards in vocational subjects were broadly average. The improvements in 2007 confirm that the college has successfully begun to address the dip in standards, which occurred after 2004, and that there is now a rising trend. Students make satisfactory progress from their starting points on entry to the sixth form and their achievement is satisfactory. Students' personal development is excellent and they speak very highly of the support they receive. Students' progress is tracked against their targets well and preparation for higher education is good. However, the college recognises that tutors could provide more focused guidance to

students on their progress. The excellent curriculum provides students with a broad and balanced education. The compulsory general studies, active tutorial work, work experience and PE is a strength of the curriculum. Teaching is at least satisfactory and there are increasing examples of good teaching. However, students are not provided with sufficient opportunities for independent learning and supported study and this affects their understanding in some subjects. The senior team know the issues that face the sixth form and have implemented curriculum change and effective systems for reviewing the quality of provision. There are convincing plans for further development and student numbers are rising. Leadership and management in the sixth form are good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards and students' progress in the sixth form.
- Ensure that there are greater opportunities for students to develop the skills of independent learning in the sixth form and across the college.
- Develop opportunities for students to take more responsibility within the college.

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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	3
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	3
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	2	
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	3
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	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

21 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Branston Community College, Branston LN4 1LH

As you know, I recently inspected your college and this letter summarises the results of the inspection. However, first, I would like to thank you for your co-operation during the visit. My colleague and I were very impressed with those of you that we met and we valued your comments and opinions. You represented the college extremely well.

The inspection found that yours is an outstanding college overall. You make excellent progress through to the end of Year 11 and standards are improving each year. Your behaviour and attitude to learning is impressive. You get involved in a wide range of activities and events. You benefit from a wide range of courses, particularly those based around business and enterprise. You generally receive very good teaching and there is excellent support for your learning. Relationships in the college are excellent and there is a strong sense of community. The Principal and senior staff lead the college very well. Much of this also applies to the sixth form where the curriculum and guidance are very good. However, although improving steadily, standards here are broadly average and students make satisfactory progress.

There are some areas that the college should continue to develop. Some of these issues came out in our discussions with you.

- The college should further improve the standards reached in the sixth form and the progress made by students.
- You need to develop greater skills in working independently both in the sixth form and across the college.
- The college should provide more opportunities for you to take on responsibilities so that you can display your confidence and social skills more fully.

I am sure that the college will continue to improve. I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Cragg

Her Majesty's Inspector