

# Whitby Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121667
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314077
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Maddison 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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1093
6th form	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss J Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr K Prytherch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Prospect Hill Whitby North Yorkshire YO21 1LA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01947 602406
<b>Fax number</b>	01947 821169

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<b>Age group</b>	14-19
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average-sized school serving the town of Whitby and neighbouring villages. It takes students from the ages of 14 to 19 and is served principally by two secondary deemed middle schools. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is below the national average. Whereas the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also below average, the proportion with statements of special educational needs is average. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. There are very few looked after children. The school is a Specialist Technology College and in 2005 became part of an Extended Schools Cluster. The college is also part of a confederation in Whitby to provide education for students aged 11 to 19 and is helping to improve provision in the town through the North Yorkshire Coast Area Learning Partnership. The college has achieved Investors in People status and the Sportsmark Award.

At the last inspection in February 2007, the college was given a Notice to Improve, having been in Special Measures for the preceding two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The college is emerging from a lengthy period of underperformance and is now a satisfactory and improving school giving satisfactory value for money. It has some significant strengths, most notably in leadership and management, in the curriculum and in the good levels of care, guidance and support provided for the students. It provides a safe and secure environment in which students feel valued and well cared for. The college is beginning to live up to its motto of 'creating a climate for learners to grow in'.

Achievement is improving and it is now satisfactory. In recent years achievement has been inadequate. However, determined efforts to raise standards and improve achievement are now beginning to have a positive impact. Evidence from lessons and from the college's comprehensive monitoring of student performance indicates that more students in Year 11 are on target to gain at least five GCSEs at grades A\* to C in 2008. Standards are rising because the climate for learning is improving, and students are beginning to gain the results expected given the fact that they enter the college with attainment which is above average. However, there is scope for higher achievement and for more students to attain higher standards.

The personal development and well-being of students is satisfactory. The extent to which they adopt safe practices is good, as is their contribution to the community especially that within the college. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though spiritual development is not as strong as the other aspects. The student council is active and manages its own budget. It also organises a number of charity fundraising activities that increase students' awareness of the wider community and make a valuable contribution to their personal development. Relationships between students and between students and teachers are positive and most students are keen to learn and to do well. However, their enthusiasm for college and for learning is muted in part by lessons that fail to inspire them often enough. Teaching is improving and in the very best lessons expectations are high and students are challenged. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

The curriculum is good. It is increasingly based on the needs, interests and aptitudes of the students and it reflects well the local context. The college works well in partnership with external agencies to promote students' well-being and to provide additional curriculum opportunities. It closely monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum it provides both on site and in conjunction with other providers, and this helps to ensure that students can access the most appropriate courses which will provide them with the skills they need in the world of work. Transition into the college in Year 10 is a strength, as is the pastoral care and academic guidance provided. Students' progress is tracked well and effective systems are in place to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. It also means that those students who need additional help are identified at an early stage and given appropriate support.

Leadership and management are good. The current headteacher was confirmed in post earlier this year, having been interim headteacher since September 2007. He is supported well by a dedicated and determined senior leadership team, an astute and committed governing body, and a hard working and well focused staff, all of whom are eager to see the college improve. Governance is now good; governors are well informed, are supportive of the college and are

committed to ensuring the best possible standards of education and care for the students. During a relatively short period of time the headteacher has revitalised the staff. Their morale is high and their shared sense of purpose helps to explain the level of improvement which has taken place. Senior leaders have clear roles and responsibilities, middle leaders feel empowered and classroom teachers feel encouraged and supported. Together they have managed effectively the implementation of a range of strategies to tackle areas for improvement identified during the last inspection. Consequently, actions are sustainable and supported by a detailed long-term view of college improvement, although academic targets as yet provide no more than adequate challenge.

Achievement is improving, as is teaching and learning. Performance data is being used more effectively to monitor students' progress, identify potential underachievement and determine appropriate support. Although much has been accomplished, much has yet to be done to embed the improvements in teaching and learning and to ensure that standards continue to rise. Furthermore, specialist status has had only limited impact across the college, though plans are in place to remedy this weakness. On the whole leadership and management have been highly effective in tackling the issues facing the college and the capacity to improve is good.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards in the sixth form are rising and students' achievement is good. A-level results in 2007 continued the year-on-year improvement and were above national averages. Sixth formers benefit from access to a wide range of academic A-level courses and a good and developing selection of vocational programmes which link well with employment patterns in the locality. Teaching and learning are good because teachers make lessons active by involving and encouraging students to develop their independent learning and group work skills. Expectations are high and a good and increasing proportion of students progress into higher education or employment on leaving the college. Students value the good level of care and support which helps them to develop confidence and maturity. They particularly appreciate the guidance that they receive, especially the way the college monitors their progress and helps them to improve their work. They also appreciate the choice of courses and the opportunities to participate in activities outside lessons. They respond well to the opportunities to take responsibility, though aspects of their personal development, such as their community involvement and their adoption of healthy lifestyles, are underdeveloped. As a result, students' personal development is satisfactory rather than good. Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. There is good capacity for further improvement because the steps taken to improve provision and outcomes for students have already made a difference for the students.

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

- Raise achievement and standards.
- Improve teaching and learning so that there is greater expectation and challenge in all lessons.
- Ensure that specialist status has a much greater impact across the college to the benefit of all students.

A small proportion of the schools where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The achievement of students is improving and it is now satisfactory. As a result, standards are rising. Students enter the college with above average levels of attainment and in 2007 the proportion of students gaining five subjects at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was higher than the national average. Nevertheless, in recent years students have not gained the expected results in public examinations at GCSE given their level of prior attainment. However, over the last year, and particularly since the appointment of the current headteacher, the college has started to make the improvements needed to tackle the underachievement which existed. As a result of robust strategies and interventions, students are performing better in lessons and in tests. The thorough and regular monitoring of performance indicates that achievement and standards are improving across the college for all students including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall students are doing better because teaching and learning are getting better. It is also because most students have positive attitudes to their studies and want to do well. Academic guidance is improving and support is being closely targeted to help those students who particularly need it.

## **Personal development and well-being**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The personal development and well-being of the students is satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with strengths in moral and social development. Students speak highly of the help, support and guidance they receive. They say they feel safe in college and that when cases of bullying occur the college deals with them quickly and effectively. A range of effective strategies has brought about an improvement in attendance and it now matches the national average. Students are generally orderly but there is still some low-level misbehaviour in lessons and some inappropriately boisterous behaviour around college. Most students demonstrate satisfactory awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and they are coming to appreciate the healthier options in the college canteen. Students enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities and there are high levels of regular participation in physical activities. They are keen to influence improvements in college through the student council, such as the setting up of a peer mentoring scheme and helping to design a new physical education kit. Many students contribute positively to the college community through, for example, the informative newspapers produced by each tutor group. Their developing social skills and their satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills prepare them adequately for the next steps in their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, it is improving not least because of the use of a common approach and the sharing of good practice. Relationships are good

and help to ensure that learning is at least satisfactory. Where teaching assistants are used, they are effective in the support they provide. In the best lessons, teachers exhibit good subject knowledge, plan interesting activities using a wide range of resources and manage classes well. They also ensure that there is challenge for all students regardless of their ability. However, too many lessons are satisfactory rather than good. In these lessons the students are not sufficiently engaged and the pace of learning is too slow. Generally this is because the teaching does not inspire the students, and these lessons are dominated by the teacher. As a result, students do not have sufficient time in which to develop independent learning skills. In addition teachers' expectations of what students can do and achieve are sometimes too low. As a result students, particularly the most able, do not have the opportunity to realise their potential. Teaching is good in the sixth form not least because work is channelled more precisely to the needs of individual students.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is good; it reflects local circumstances and it is being regularly reviewed and refined to ensure that it matches students' needs and interests. As a result, it is helping to raise standards and to improve achievement and the personal development of the students. Statutory requirements are met and progression routes are clear. As well as a wide range of GCSE courses, there are also a number of vocational courses at foundation and intermediate levels. These options are popular and include motor vehicle maintenance, hair and beauty and animal management, as well as apprenticeships in engineering. Work-related learning is effective and personalised learning programmes are provided for the most vulnerable students. Provision for numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, as are opportunities to take on responsibilities in the community. There is good provision for enrichment in music, drama, art and sport. These activities are popular with students and participation rates are high. There is a strong programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education which informs students well for their future lives. The sixth form provides a good curriculum and students have a range of appropriate courses available to them. This is helping to ensure that the number of students who are not in education, employment or training is much lower in Whitby than in the whole of the Scarborough district.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

The care, guidance and support for students are good and are beginning to contribute effectively to students' progress and their personal development and well-being. Current national requirements for safeguarding students are met, arrangements for child protection are in place and all necessary risk assessments are undertaken. The college's system for tracking progress is rigorous and thorough and teachers are well equipped with the necessary assessment information to monitor progress thoroughly. This ensures that students increasingly receive helpful and timely guidance on how to improve further. As a result, students know their academic targets, are clear about how they should improve their work and are given appropriate support. The college works well with its partner schools to ensure that students receive good guidance about their subject choices before they enter Year 10. Productive links with external agencies ensure that Year 11 students are well informed and guided as to their subsequent career and

post-16 opportunities. The role of learning mentors is developing well to increase the college's capacity to support students with additional needs. Those students who are identified as being at risk of underachieving benefit from a range of effective academic and pastoral support to bring them back on track. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also well supported by close links between home and school.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management have had a significant impact on the improvements which have taken place in the college in recent months and are now good. The sensitive and supportive, yet rigorous and determined, headteacher has galvanised staff and students to improve the ethos, attitude and culture in the college. He is ably supported by the senior leadership team which has clearly defined and appropriate responsibilities and the freedom to exercise them. The college knows itself well and planning for improvement is good. However, it needs now to focus on fewer key priorities with more detailed responsibilities and timescales. Day-to-day management is good and the college runs smoothly. Leaders and managers at all levels have been empowered to fulfil their roles and they are becoming more effective in their work. They know the strengths and weaknesses in the areas for which they are responsible and this is evidenced in very effective departmental evaluation. As a result, they are focused on raising standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their departments, though their work has yet to impact fully in the classroom and on improving achievement and standards.

Specialist status has brought benefits to the college but it has had limited impact upon students' achievement across the curriculum. Senior leaders are well aware of this weakness and plans are well advanced to improve this situation. The restructured governing body has had a significant impact on the improvements in the college. Acting as a rigorous yet supportive 'critical friend', it has clarified long term staffing needs and made key appointments. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection support the work of the college. Financial management is sound and ensures that staff and resources are well deployed. As a result, the college offers satisfactory value for money.



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## 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?	3	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?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
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	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
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	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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>	2	2
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	3	
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	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

Inspection of Whitby Community College, Whitby, YO21 1LA

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited the college. We greatly appreciated the time you spent talking to us and we found your comments very helpful.

We came to the college to find out what was going well and what could be improved. We found that:

- you attend a satisfactory and improving college
- the college is well led and managed by the headteacher and all those who make decisions
- the progress you make is improving and it is now satisfactory
- teaching in lessons is getting better
- the pastoral care you receive is good, as is the guidance you receive about your work
- the behaviour of most of you is improving but there is some low-level misbehaviour in lessons and some of you are rather too boisterous around college.

As a result we found that the college no longer requires 'significant improvement' as it did when it was inspected last year. However, you could do much better and we have asked Mr Prytherch, the teachers and the governors to continue the work they are undertaking to make sure that you all achieve as well as you can and gain the best possible results in examinations. We have also asked your teachers to have higher expectations of what you can do and achieve in lessons and to challenge you to do even better. Finally, we have asked that more is done so that all of you benefit much more from the specialist status which the college has.

Your teachers are working hard on your behalf but it is also up to you to aim high, listen to their advice, behave well and always try your best.

We very much enjoyed visiting the college and I would like to thank you once again for being so friendly and helpful.