

Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124814
Local Authority	SUFFOLK LA
Inspection number	315070
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Joan Hewitt

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	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Smith
Headteacher	Mr Perry Linsley
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
School address	Wilby Road Stradbroke Eye Suffolk IP21 5JN
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. Almost all of the students are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of students who have learning difficulties and disabilities is in line with the national average, although the proportion with statements of special educational need is well above average. The college gained specialist business and enterprise status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This effective college provides a warm and caring environment in which students make at least good progress. The community regards itself as a family, and indeed this is evident in the strong relationships and mutual respect students and adults show towards each other.

The care, guidance and support provided for students are outstanding features. Teachers and other adults know each student individually and ensure that their needs are met well. As a result, students leave the college as well rounded individuals able to take their place in further education, training or employment. This is particularly significant for the high proportion of youngsters who have a statement of special educational need.

Students' outstanding personal development is a result of the extremely good care the college takes of them. In this small inclusive community their moral and social outlook is excellent and they are supportive of each other. This creates a safe environment in which students look after one another, for example, through supporting the improvement of reading. Cultural links, such as the exciting work with a Kenyan school, ensure that students are prepared well for a life in a diverse society.

The college's specialist status for business and enterprise has resulted in many positive improvements, not least the range of innovative entrepreneurial opportunities available for students. For example, Year 10 students run a popular farmers' market for the local community. The college is rightly proud of its outstanding links with partners, including parents, businesses, social agencies, and the variety of other institutions. These provide older students with the opportunity to pursue a range of courses.

Students enter the college with average ability and two thirds of them leave Year 11 with five or more higher GCSE grades, which is above national figures. Standards are therefore above average and students make good progress. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities are catered for particularly well, through the range of alternative accreditation they gain. The progress students make in English and mathematics is a strong feature, and the college is aware of the work to be done to make sure students reach similar standards in all subjects.

There is good teaching in the college but this is not consistent. Notably, information and communication technology (ICT) is an area requiring considerable improvement. The college acknowledges this shortcoming and is taking action to improve the subject as well as some other areas. Teachers take steps to ensure students are aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their learning but this is yet to be fully embedded in the day-to-day guidance they receive. Students behave well both in and out of lessons. However, they are sometimes too compliant and do not always take full responsibility for their learning, which prevents them from making even better progress.

The headteacher is supported well by senior managers in providing a clear and strong sense of direction for the college. This is driving forward an ethos of 'caring challenge' and high achievement for every student. In the relatively short period since his appointment, the headteacher has put in place systems to monitor and evaluate the progress individuals make. These systems are not yet fully developed but are indicative of the level of challenge he provides. Middle leaders also play a part in monitoring the work of the school, sometimes very effectively, but this is inconsistent.

The governing body is a strength of the school and provides rigorous support and challenge. This was particularly evident in the very good work, led by the college's widely respected business manager, in achieving the Financial Management Standards. The college is demonstrating a strong capacity to improve: it has taken good steps to improve the range of its curriculum and develop all staff so that they take full responsibility for the progress made by all the students in their care.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum in ICT.
- Ensure consistency in the work of middle leaders.
- Develop students' ability to play a more responsible role in their own learning through assessing and evaluating their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students make good progress as they move through the college. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress, because of the excellent academic and personal guidance they receive. The college knows there is still work to be done in improving the number of students who gain five or more A* to G in GCSE examinations. Good teaching ensures that students make very good progress in mathematics and English at both Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations. Progress is good across many subject areas. However, in some key areas, students do not make the expected levels, particularly in ICT. The college has taken effective action to address underachievement in history and science. A more appropriate course has secured improvements in business studies. More able students also make good progress because of the enrichment to which they have access. Teachers and students use the 'passport to success' in Year 11 which helps them to identify targets. This recent introduction is showing early signs of helping students to have a sharper focus on achievement. The college sets itself challenging targets that are reinforced by the targets set for individual subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The strong relationships between all members of the college community reflect a high level of mutual respect and collaboration. Students enjoy coming to college and attend regularly. Behaviour around the college and in lessons is good. Students are helpful and supportive of each other. A few students are less committed to their learning but the college manages this effectively. As a result, there is a calm and relaxed atmosphere throughout. Parents and students rightly view the school as a very safe and secure place to learn. They report that bullying is rare and it is resolved effectively when it does occur. The college council plays an increasingly responsible role in representing the voice of students in aspects such as healthy eating, the homework policy, the curriculum and improvement of facilities. A high and successful participation in various sports and a greater emphasis on healthy eating has encouraged many more students to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are knowledgeable about global and domestic issues and take action to address their concerns. This is evident in their fund-raising activities for charity. Students engage readily in personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship and religious education. These aspects help to support their development as good citizens and prepare them for life in a diverse society.

Specialist status as a business and enterprise college has helped students develop their literacy and financial capability, as well as considerable economic awareness, through a wide range of local links.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Students make good progress because teaching is effective. Teachers are supportive and committed to helping students make good progress. Students appreciate the additional time offered by teachers after school and at lunchtimes. Lessons have a variety of interesting activities, matched to students' needs, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Most teachers have good subject knowledge but this can occasionally be less secure when they are teaching subjects other than their specialist areas. Behaviour in lessons is good and this creates a positive learning environment. In the most successful lessons, the tasks students are set help them to assess their own progress and develop a sense of responsibility for their learning. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students were successfully using demanding assessment criteria to improve their approach to a written examination. Less successful lessons rely too heavily on the teacher's input and give students insufficient opportunities to work independently. Often in these lessons, tasks lack challenge and behaviour is compliant.

Students are aware of their targets and their main pieces of work are marked helpfully, to give them an accurate picture of what they have done well and the next steps they should take to improve their work. However, this is not yet evident in the day-to-day marking of their books. The college has high expectations and there are systems in place to identify areas in need of improvement. This has resulted in good quality training which is maintaining a steady improvement in the quality of teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The college is rightly proud of the curriculum and the support it provides for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. A range of appropriate accreditation for students who are unable to participate in GCSE courses enables all students to enter employment, education or training when they leave in Year 11. The college has improved provision for gifted and talented students since the last inspection through well attended summer schools and after school 'aim higher' enrichment classes. Specialist business and enterprise college status has had a very positive impact on the curriculum in Key Stage 4. There is a range of exciting courses for students including extensive links with other institutions. This ensures that the range of students' needs is met.

The curriculum for developing English and mathematics is good. The work of the English coordinator, who is also the librarian, enhances the provision in Key Stage 3. Students are taught study skills, which supports their learning across the school. ICT is used soundly across the different subject areas but the specialist ICT programmes are not sufficiently effective to improve standards. The wider curriculum is enhanced through innovative cross-curricular enterprise activities, sport, arts and additional academic support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support systems are outstanding features. The college achieves this by the attention it gives to students' pastoral needs. Adults know the students well because of the emphasis on building strong relationships. Child protection procedures are coordinated very well and reflect the strong links the school has with outside care agencies.

Parents are positive and appreciative of the work of the school. For example, one parent commented, 'There is a brilliant atmosphere where every child matters and they are encouraged to reach their full potential.' This strength is evident in the work of the specialist support centre that provides for students with significant special educational needs in the local area. Careers and further education guidance is a very strong feature as part of a good PSHE and citizenship programme. The college works hard to raise the students' aspirations.

A developing strength is the good academic monitoring and support process. The systems the college has for tracking students' progress are developing and this is enabling staff to identify any underachievement and take swift action. There is some inconsistency in practice across different subject areas but rigorous checks on students' work and the use of ambitious targets are successfully driving up standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the college are effective and improving. Parents are supportive of the inclusive ethos that promotes academic success and personal and social development for all students. The headteacher, together with staff and governors, strives to improve standards. The impact of the specialist school status was initially limited but the appointment of the new business and enterprise director is now having a marked effect. Additional resources and links are providing the opportunity for the college to accelerate the pace of school improvement.

Honest and regular self-evaluation takes place throughout the college and there are examples of very effective practice. The college is working to ensure this becomes consistent. There is a readiness by all staff to adopt new and improved practices. Middle leaders are held accountable through line management systems but they are inconsistent in their performance.

The governing body provide strong support and is well organised. Governors play a key role in strategic development and regularly challenge the college to ensure school improvement. The headteacher is passionate in seeking opportunities for the college to work with partners. This ensures that this small, caring college provides a breadth of experiences for the students in its care.

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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?	2
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	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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?	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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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

30 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Stradbroke Business and Enterprise College, Eye IP21 5JN

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your college. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and listening to your views. You were very friendly and open. You played an important role in helping us find out about your college. We think you are right to be proud of Stradbroke College. We found that some of the things your college does to help you learn and achieve were good. The way teachers and other adults care and support you is excellent. Mr Linsley and the teachers check your work and the quality of your lessons regularly. Your best work is marked very helpfully and we have asked your teachers to mark your books in the same way.

Most lessons are helping you to do your best and more is being done to make sure all of your lessons are interesting and challenge you to take responsibility for your learning. The college works hard to help you make good progress in different subjects and that is why so many of you achieve well. We think you are developing into responsible and considerate citizens.

There is an impressive range of activities for you to take part in and it was good to see so many of you take part in them. You have good facilities in the college and, because of its specialist status, there are many opportunities for you to find out about business and enterprise in everyday life. We were particularly impressed to hear about your farmers' market. Many of you told us how much you enjoy college life and the enterprise activities in which you are involved.

We have asked Mr Linsley and the staff to improve the quality of ICT and we know he is already working on this. We also think you could improve your learning by taking a more responsible role in assessing and evaluating your own work. This will help you to understand what you need to do next to achieve a higher level or grade. The college should also make sure that your work is thoroughly checked in every subject so that you can do as well as you can in everything.

You are lucky to attend a small college that has big ambitions for you. The college is a good place to learn and you can make sure this gets even better by working hard and putting the advice from your teachers in to practice.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Lead inspector