

The College of Richard Collyer

Inspection report

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 – outstanding*
- *grade 2 – good*
- *grade 3 – satisfactory*
- *grade 4 – inadequate*

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of this inspection, inspectors took account of: the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans; comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body; and where appropriate the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk); reports from the inspectorate annual assessment visits or quality monitoring inspection; and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the last inspection. This inspection focused on the following aspects:

- overall effectiveness of the organisation and its capacity to improve further
- achievement and standards
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. The College of Richard Collyer is a sixth form college in Horsham, West Sussex. It caters primarily for students aged between 16 and 18 studying full-time on level 3 courses. As well as a broad range of Advanced (A) and Advanced Subsidiary (AS) level subjects, the college offers a small number of programmes leading to vocational qualifications at levels 2 and 3. It also provides courses at level 1 for students to take in addition to their main studies and as part of its adult education programme. The college is a partner in a Centre of Vocational Excellence (CoVE) in sport. Of approximately 1,400 full-time equivalent students aged 16 to 18, around two-thirds enrol directly from three partner schools in Horsham. Most of these students enrol at the college having achieved well in their GCSEs. The college is located in a relatively prosperous area. Approximately 9% of the

students are from minority ethnic groups, broadly in line with the local community.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Outstanding: Grade 1
Leadership and management	Outstanding: Grade 1
<i>Equality of opportunity</i>	<i>Good: contributory grade 2</i>

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

2. Overall effectiveness is outstanding. Achievement and standards are good. Students aged 16 to 18 who study advanced level courses represent around 95% of the college's work. These students enjoy being at college, achieve their qualifications and progress to higher education, gap years or employment. In a minority of cases, students do not achieve as well as they should, given their high GCSE grades. Level 2 courses and adult education are not of such a high standard as the core provision, but they are improving. Teaching is of a very high standard and the outstanding pastoral support given to students by teachers and other college staff is a particularly strong feature of the college. Students value highly the welfare services available. They benefit from very good resources and a wide range of courses to choose from. In addition to their main studies, students participate enthusiastically in an excellent range of sporting and cultural activities. The college is gradually extending its curriculum to include more vocational courses. Links with the college's three partner schools are very good and the college is expanding its work with employers, particularly through its CoVE in sport. Leadership and management are outstanding. The college's response to equality of opportunity is good, as is social and educational inclusion. The college meets its statutory requirements in relation to equality and diversity. With very good financial management, the college provides excellent value for money. The self-assessment report (SAR) is evaluative and self-critical and inspectors agree with almost all the judgements and grades.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

3. The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Over the last few years, the college has increased student numbers, improved resources, expanded the vocational curriculum and maintained high success rates. Quality assurance arrangements have become increasingly rigorous and are sufficiently robust to ensure that the college is in a position to address identified weaknesses and to improve still further.

The effectiveness of the steps taken by the college to promote improvement since the last inspection

4. Excellent progress has been made in improving the areas for development identified at the last inspection. For example, key skills achievement rates have improved to above the national average and day-time students on level 2 courses now have appropriate work placements. The availability and use of information and learning technologies (ILT) have improved significantly. With the recent completion of more lifts and ramps, almost all areas of the college are accessible to those with mobility restrictions.

Key strengths

- very high success rates for students aged 16 to 18 on advanced courses
- very high success rates on A2 courses
- outstanding teaching and learning
- outstanding pastoral support for students
- excellent enrichment
- very good learning resources
- rigorous self-assessment, particularly at course level.

Areas for improvement

The college should address:

- students' performance in a minority of subjects, including mathematics
- the progress students make in relation to their prior attainment.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

5. Achievement and standards are good. The vast majority of students at the college are aged 16 to 18 and studying advanced level courses. Overall success rates for these students are very high, reaching 90% in 2006/07, which is significantly above the national average and an improvement on the previous two years. On nearly all A2 courses, pass rates are 100%. Success rates are satisfactory for students aged 16 to 18 taking courses at levels 1 and 2, and for part-time adult students. Success rates for adult students taking AS level and GCSE courses at evening classes are low. Most students on level 3 courses enter the college having achieved well in their GCSEs. The proportion that achieves high grades in their advanced level course is above the national average but there are inconsistencies between subjects. For example, in both mathematics and music, students' results were disappointing in 2006/07. In many subjects students' progress is very good but, in a significant minority, too few students achieve the grades indicated by their potential. Students attend well and punctually. The standard of their work is good, with high quality work in many subjects.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

6. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers are both passionate and knowledgeable about their subjects, and transmit their enthusiasm effectively to students. Good progress has been made in broadening the range of teaching techniques used throughout the college and many lessons are characterised by a wide range of learning activities and resources, including some very effective use of ILT. Good progress has also been made in ensuring that teachers pay effective attention to students of differing abilities in lessons. The internal lesson observation scheme and frequent staff development focused on pedagogical issues are effective in encouraging teachers to reflect on their classroom practice. Managers show a sharp appreciation of where the few pockets of weaker teaching are and are developing sound strategies to improve the quality of all lessons. Teachers mark students' work assiduously and, in most cases, give very detailed feedback that helps students to improve. Students enjoy their lessons and many develop a real thirst for learning.
7. The curriculum offer meets particularly well the needs and interests of those students aged 16 to 18 who wish to gain advanced level qualifications and go on to higher education. At this level students have an excellent choice of over forty-five A2/AS subjects and also a smaller number of courses leading to vocational qualifications. Responding to local demand, the curriculum offer at level 2 provides students with the opportunity to take several different vocational courses and GCSEs in English, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Many students take these courses, or others offered at level 1, in addition to their main programme of study. The college meets the needs of local adults well with a good range of evening classes. The CoVE

partnership has led to the college providing work-based learning opportunities for 13 students.

8. Enrichment is outstanding. The college offers an extensive range of sporting, drama and music activities and a variety of clubs and societies. Most students benefit from subject-specific educational visits and talks from external speakers. Many of the activities on offer enable students to acquire or develop further work-related skills. Students make a positive contribution to the local community and, more widely, to charitable causes through their fund-raising initiatives.
9. Students receive outstanding support and guidance. Links with partner schools are excellent, and students both from these schools and others receive very good advice and guidance throughout the process of applying to and being inducted into the college. During their time at the college, the personal support available to all students, including those in need of additional learning support, is superb. Students value highly the wide range of welfare services available, including counselling. Much emphasis is put on encouraging young people to lead safe and healthy lives. For example, very effective sessions to raise awareness about sexual health, and about safe driving, are included in the tutorial programme. Students benefit from seeing their personal tutor each day, and speak very warmly about the individual help available to them. The support they receive in respect of their academic progress is increasingly rigorous, although there is still more to do to ensure that all students achieve the challenging targets set for them. Most students progress to higher education and these students are very well supported in their applications. Arrangements to support students who are applying for further training or employment are sound.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Contributory grade:

Equality of opportunity

Good: grade 2

10. Leadership and management are outstanding. The principal and governors set a clear strategic direction and the college is very well managed. Governors are highly committed to their work and they participate effectively in monitoring performance.
11. The college's self-assessment process is rigorous. Self-assessment reports for individual faculties benefit from a robust management information system that provides teachers and managers with accurate data to inform their judgements. The judgements and grades in these SARs are realistic. However, the summary judgement for achievement and standards in the SAR is overly generous and does not give sufficient weight to weaknesses in students' performance as identified in the faculty SARs.
12. The college works productively with employers as part of its CoVE partnership arrangements. Links with local partner schools are very good

and the college, as a key player in a number of strategic partnerships, is influential in determining the curriculum offer for local students aged 14 to 19.

13. Accommodation and resources are outstanding. Students benefit from recent refurbishments that include a multi-gym, new IT suite, learning resource centre and science laboratory. Plans are at an advanced stage to improve the accommodation still further. Financial management and value for money are very good.
14. With recent improvements to the campus the college has made good efforts to meet the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002. The college has responded appropriately to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The college's approach to equality of opportunity is good. Staff and governors have had helpful training on compliance and the implications of the legislation but the active promotion of good race relations remains an area for further development. The college has appropriate policies and systems in place to meet government requirements on safeguarding and child protection.

Learners' achievement

Table 1

Success rates on mainstream level 1 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

		16-18				19+			
Notional Level	Exp End Year	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	04/05	318	90	64	26	94	64	56	8
	05/06	224	83	71	12	94	67	56	11
	06/07*	179	82	n/a		79	62	n/a	
Other	04/05	318	90	63	27	94	64	56	8
	05/06	224	83	71	12	94	67	56	11
	06/07*	179	82	n/a		79	62	n/a	

* college data

Table 2

Success rates on mainstream level 2 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

		16-18				19+			
Notional Level	Exp End Year	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	04/05	379	71	73	-2	117	66	56	10
	05/06	288	79	78	1	127	65	64	1
	06/07*	374	76	n/a		110	64	n/a	
GCSEs	04/05	168	77	78	-1	104	63	65	-2
	05/06	162	75	82	-7	93	60	66	-6
	06/07*	157	83	n/a		75	59	n/a	
Other	04/05	164	62	62	0	13	85	52	33
	05/06	95	85	70	15	34	79	61	18
	06/07*	218	71	n/a		35	74	n/a	

* college data

Table 3

Success rates on mainstream level 3 qualifications, by qualification type, expected end year and age, 2005 to 2007, compared with the national rates for colleges of a similar type.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	16-18				19+			
		Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff	Starts - Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	Diff
3 Long	04/05	3783	88	82	6	178	63	59	4
	05/06	4258	87	83	4	220	60	65	-5
	06/07*	4587	90	n/a		186	62	n/a	
A/A2 level	04/05	1339	95	92	3	26	88	76	12
	05/06	1356	94	93	1	65	68	78	-11
	06/07*	1495	97	n/a		43	70	n/a	
AS Levels	04/05	2309	85	78	7	130	54	54	0
	05/06	2627	85	79	6	122	53	58	-5
	06/07*	2784	87	n/a		112	54	n/a	
Other	04/05	21	48	72	-24	21	90	56	34
	05/06	144	74	75	-1	33	70	62	8
	06/07*	301	83	n/a		31	81	n/a	

* college data