

Emmanuel College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108420
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	324765
Inspection dates	18–19 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Paul Hancock HMI

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

Type of school	City technology college
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1235
Sixth form	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Peter Vardy
Headteacher	Mr Jonathan Winch
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2006
School address	Consett Road Lobley Hill Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE11 0AN
Telephone number	0191 4602099
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Emmanuel College is a larger-than-average specialist technology business and enterprise college and sixth form with a Christian ethos. Nearly all students have English as their first language and there are few students from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Emmanuel College is an outstanding school, as it was at the time of the previous inspection in 2006. It has continued to improve, for example, leadership and management in the sixth form was good three years ago and is now outstanding. All students including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress.

Standards are exceptionally high. Challenging targets are met and frequently exceeded. GCSE results are well above average with 85% of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics in 2008 compared with 48% nationally. Ninety eight per cent of students gained five or more higher GCSE grades in the same year. The difference between boys' and girls' results is much closer than that found nationally. Specialist College status continues to make a significant impact. For example, all students study technology courses and in 2008, 100% gained higher grades in GCSE with more than four times the national average gaining A* and A grades. Fifty per cent of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities gained five or more GCSEs A* to C grades including English and mathematics from low starting points.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and a significant proportion is outstanding. The college is taking the right action to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning in order to raise achievement even more, for example, by improving the quality of assessment. Attendance is well above average and behaviour is excellent. The curriculum and extra activities meet the needs and interests of students exceptionally well.

Personal development is outstanding and students are very well cared for, guided and supported. They feel safe and parents are highly complimentary about the college. Comments such as 'Emmanuel is an excellent school which gets the most out of its students' are routine. Links and students' work with a diverse range of communities such as care homes and hospitals make an outstanding contribution to community cohesion.

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. Highly effective leadership by the board of directors and the headteacher makes sure managers at all levels are being held very closely to account. The college's own evaluation of how well it is doing is accurate and the school knows itself exceptionally well. Its capacity to improve is outstanding. Resources and staff are effectively deployed to achieve excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

Students achieve very high standards and make excellent progress in the sixth form. Leadership and management are highly effective. Retention rates are well above average and the vast majority of students continue their studies in higher education. Teaching and learning is good and a significant proportion is outstanding. The curriculum is highly effective at meeting the needs of students and parents. It has been broadened and includes a wider range of academic and vocational subjects. Students are exceptionally well cared for, guided and supported. Personal development is outstanding and students develop into confident, independent and mature young people who make a significant contribution to the wider community.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are exceptionally high and achievement is excellent because the college sets extremely challenging targets and maintains a relentless and effective focus on them. Students start in Year 7 with attainment that is slightly above average. All groups of boys and girls make exceptional progress which results in well above average standards.

GCSE results are exceptionally high. For example, over the last three years, the proportion of pupils with five higher grade GCSE results, including English and mathematics, has been almost twice the national average. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often produce quite outstanding GCSE performances. For example, many of those with the weakest reading skills on entry to the college go on to achieve five GCSE results in the range A* to C including English and mathematics. This is because the college is so successful in rectifying deficiencies in students' reading skills between Years 7 and 9. A small group of around 15 of the college's September Year 7 entry joins in January of Year 6. They make very rapid progress with reading and often reach average standards in English, mathematics and science after a few months of intensive teaching.

Specialist subjects have a profound upwards effect upon the college's overall GCSE performance. Results in design and technology, information and communication technology (ICT) and business are very high and combine with those of other subjects to help the college to be placed amongst the very best performing schools in the country. Current standards reflect the excellent results of the last three years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Relations between students and with adults in the college are excellent and they greatly enjoy all aspects of college life. This is reflected in their exemplary behaviour and well above average levels of attendance. Attitudes to learning are exceptionally mature and positive. Students feel safe, valued and in return are keen to play their part to improve the lives of others both home and abroad. Many are involved in the school's international visits and are aware of human rights issues around the world. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflected in the high level of consideration shown throughout the college.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and adopt a sensible, balanced diet although this is not always evident in the choices they make at breaks and lunchtimes. A strong commitment to healthy living is seen in the many students who take part in extra-curricular sport as well as their involvement in programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Contributions to the community are excellent in school where they have a strong voice in bringing about significant change and more widely, for example, during visits to Africa where they visit and help Aids victims. All students in the sixth form are involved in a service activity including some trained to guide visually impaired people in association with a local hospital. The skills students will need in adult life are developed exceptionally well, with particular strengths in social interaction, business and enterprise.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence confirms the college's view that teaching and learning are consistently good and a significant proportion of lessons are outstanding. The college is increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning in order to raise achievement even more, for example, by making the quality of feedback to students on how to improve their work more consistent. The highly effective teaching helps students to enjoy their lessons and make outstanding progress. The learning atmosphere in classrooms is exceptional because teachers manage lessons extremely well with the support of the very effective college systems.

Teachers have very high expectations and students respond well to their targets. One student remarked that although design and technology was not their best subject, they were aiming for an A grade at GCSE. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons to ensure there are a rich variety of activities to develop independent learning. Where quality is at its best, there is a very good balance between students listening to teachers and being actively engaged in their own work. Students receive excellent guidance on examination techniques. Teachers usually mark students' work thoroughly so they know how to improve it. There are still a small number of instances where marking is insufficiently detailed and does not give students all the advice they need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Curriculum provision is outstanding and provides the pathways for students to excel academically and personally. The range of academic and vocational courses together with the excellent enrichment opportunities meets the needs and aspirations of all students very well. The curriculum is substantially enhanced by the college's specialism. All students are taught business studies, design and technology and ICT and they achieve excellent results. Students are provided with many opportunities within the curriculum to apply the skills which they have learnt within the classroom to real life situations, for example, during the week-long business project for a group of Year 9 students. In addition there are many partnerships with local businesses and outside speakers.

The college regularly monitors and reviews the curriculum. For example, recent changes include the introduction of Latin at Key Stage 3 and physical education

A level in the sixth form. A strength of the curriculum is the excellent range of extra activities which include drama, music, and sport which are very well supported in the main school and the sixth form. Excellent links with external agencies and providers including local sports clubs, charities and care homes considerably enhance provision. Students say that the curriculum meets their needs and aspirations very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is exceptional. The college ensures that all students receive the right level of high quality support and this has a significant impact on their personal development and achievement. Procedures to safeguard students meet requirements. Partnerships with other agencies are

highly effective in ensuring that vulnerable students are quickly identified and given the support needed to ensure that they progress as well as other students.

The college manages transition arrangements for new students very effectively. All learners are provided with very good guidance on courses and careers and are consequently very well prepared for each stage of their education and future lives. Staff have an excellent understanding of how well students are doing personally and academically. This information is used exceptionally well to set high expectations and is a key ingredient in the well above average standards of work.

Detailed tracking and monitoring of students' performance in the sixth form supports learning and ensures that students respond well to challenging targets. Those facing difficulties receive excellent academic and pastoral guidance and support to help them to overcome their problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding because of the directors' and senior leaders' exceptionally clear vision for the college. This is communicated very effectively to students, staff, parents and the wider community. Lines of challenge and accountability are also explicit and clear at all levels. Rigorous self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and priorities for development. The commitment to excellence is very strong in all areas. Challenging and realistic targets are set for all students. All staff are aware of these and that they are accountable for them. As a result, very high standards have been maintained over the last three years. There is a strong sense of common purpose based on the college's Christian ethos, core values and mutual respect.

The college is highly inclusive and makes strenuous efforts to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination. This is central to the college's ethos of mutual respect. The contribution made to community cohesion through a range of local, national and international links and partnerships is outstanding. These include local charities, care homes and hospitals, and charities in India and Tanzania. One visually impaired lady reported that her view of young people had been 'transformed' by the work of the college.

The Board of Directors is highly effective in the development and running of the college. Directors know the college exceptionally well and challenge it to do better at all times. They have a passion and commitment for excellence in all areas. Resources are deployed effectively and efficiently to ensure excellent value for money.

The college has an excellent reputation in the local community and parents are extremely supportive. As a result, it is heavily oversubscribed with two applicants for every place. The college is certainly not complacent about its achievements. The maintenance of very high standards and improvements made since the last inspection illustrate the outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	2	2
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	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Emmanuel College, Gateshead, NE11 0AN

Thank you for all your help when I inspected the college with my colleagues. Please would you pass on my thanks to your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires and say we took all their views into account. I thought you might like to know what we thought about your college.

- Emmanuel is an outstanding college which has continued to improve since the last inspection.
- You make excellent progress and results are well above average.
- The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and a significant proportion is outstanding.
- The curriculum and extra activities meet your needs and interests exceptionally well.
- Your personal development is outstanding and you are very well cared for and supported.
- Highly effective leadership by the board of directors and the headteacher makes sure the college continues to improve.

Your teachers and the staff want to make the college even better. To help them do this, I have asked if they would:

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning.

I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Hancock HMI