

Callington Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112046
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325517
Inspection date	11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Adrian Lyons HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1380
Sixth form	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lee
Headteacher	Gary Lobbett
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2006
School address	Launceston Road Callington PL17 7DR
Telephone number	01579 383292
Fax number	01579 383562

Age group	11–19
Inspection date	11 March 2009
Inspection number	325517

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

- Students' current standards and achievement.
- The quality of the sixth form.
- The impact of professional development, including teacher training.

They gathered evidence from discussions with senior and middle leaders, teaching staff and groups of students, and from observation of parts of six lessons. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school'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

Callington Community College is a large school that has been a specialist sports college since 2000 and was designated a specialist music college in 2004. The school is an 'international school' and has recently become recognised as a high-performing specialist school for its work with gifted and talented students. The college serves the small town of Callington and a very wide rural area of south-east Cornwall. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. There are slightly more girls than boys in the main school and many more girls than boys in the sixth form. The college is a training school offering school-based initial teacher training and many opportunities for continuing professional development.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Callington Community College is a good school. It is popular. Students exhibit excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Whilst there were a few dissenters, typical of parental comments on inspection questionnaires was: 'I have only the highest praise for the staff at this school. I feel that they really care for and strive to support my child both socially and academically.' The new headteacher and leadership team are committed to ensuring that the school meets the needs and interests of all students. They have led a number of innovative developments in the school, particularly the establishment of an excellent curriculum that provides students with a wide range of choices. These developments are already beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement.

Since the last inspection, procedures have been put in place to develop greater consistency in monitoring and evaluation across all departments. However, despite these improvements, variation in students' achievement between subjects still remains and the leadership team have rightly identified the need to improve the rigour of these procedures. The monitoring of teaching and learning by both middle and senior managers accurately identifies strengths and areas in need of development. Performance management procedures for all staff are robust and clearly linked to very effective programmes of professional development. All staff are involved in professional development projects and there are a number of opportunities for staff to share and develop good practice.

The training school provides a valuable enhancement to provision. Interaction between established teachers and trainees gives trainees access to a wide range of practitioners on a daily basis. Experienced teachers often pause and reflect on their own practice. This, together with increasingly rigorous lesson observations and programmes of professional development, has ensured that the quality of teaching and learning is good. A parent commented, 'My children say the teachers are always willing to help them.'

Governors work closely with the leadership team to improve provision and outcomes in the school. Each week, a governor attends a senior management team meeting, and monthly governing body meetings are attended by members of the senior leadership team. This ensures that governors are well informed of the strengths and areas in need of development in the school and they provide senior leaders with very effective challenge and support.

The school's specialist status in sport and music has played an important part in raising the aspirations and achievement of students in the school. The wide participation of students in sport through the 'personal enhancement programme' has helped raise their self-esteem and has had a positive impact on motivation and behaviour in other subjects. The uptake of extra-curricular activities in these areas, such as individual instrumental tuition, is high. The physical education department has also led a number of whole-school teaching and learning initiatives such as the use of assessment to improve learning.

Students enter the school with standards that are very close to the national average. They make good progress between Years 7 and 11. Following the previous inspection, standards rose at the end of Year 11 in both 2006 and 2007 but then remained static in 2008. In this year, the percentage of students attaining 5 or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics declined and was just below the national average. The current Year 11 have followed the school's new accelerated curriculum and took a number of their GCSE examinations at the end of Year 10. The results attained in these examinations and the school's tracking

system indicate that standards have improved this year, and the percentage is on track to rise above the national average again. However, the leadership team recognise that there has been too much variation in students' achievement between subjects. The school is taking action to address this issue and there is evidence that variation between subjects is beginning to decrease. The school attained its challenging specialist school targets in physical education and music in 2008. Those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support and this ensures they are also making good progress in their learning.

Students and the community benefit from activities such as Community Action Through Sport, and Partners and Community Together, both of which offer students opportunities to take on leadership and responsibility and are supported by the neighbourhood police. Staff and students are proactive in planning extended services for the broader community and promoting these amongst students and their families, for example Family Extreme Sports Days. The wide range of international links with schools, together with visitors from abroad such as a 'Fair Trade' farmer, enable students to dispel stereotypes and learn about ethnic diversity, faith and culture. Well-planned provision for enterprise and financial capability education has been developed in partnership with the personal finance education group (Pfefg). Together with work-related learning, these programmes prepare students extremely well for their future economic well-being.

An excellent programme of personal, social, health and economic (PHSE) education promotes students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students work well together, display a very positive attitude to staff and each other, and are willing to discuss sensitive issues confidently. Their behaviour is exemplary, with strong in-school support for those who occasionally have difficulty either with behaviour or with emotional or social problems. Students are motivated by the reward system whereby they can earn meaningful privileges. Attendance is above average, illustrating students' enjoyment of school. There are good policies and procedures for monitoring it. Regular meetings with a wide range of external agencies such as the health authority and the Cornwall Education Business Partnership ensure that students' wider needs are met.

Links with local schools ensure that transition for new students is effective, with regular visits by senior staff to schools, and taster days for students. Students appreciate these visits, and say they quickly settle in and know who to turn to for advice. The tutor system enables staff to build strong relationships with students and their families, and there are regular meetings to discuss progress and other aspects of school life. Students know all about how to be safe in school, on trips, and when using the internet. They are encouraged to lead a healthy lifestyle and there are numerous opportunities to participate in sport within school and in extra-curricular activities and extended services. Their care, guidance and support are excellent. Summing up the strengths of the school, a parent wrote, 'The school stands out in terms of its open, relaxed, friendly and community feel. It fosters good relationships and individuality in the pupils.'

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form provides a good education for post-16 learners. Standards in the sixth form were similar to the national average in 2007 and 2008, and until recently, students' achievement had been broadly satisfactory. However, effective action taken by the sixth form leadership team to raise standards is having a positive impact. Students in the current Year 13 are on track to attain standards above the national average. The progress made by students is now good, although variation in achievement between subjects remains. Under the direction of relatively new leadership and management, the monitoring of sixth form progress has improved markedly.

A renewed emphasis on achievement through a combination of effective tutoring and better teaching and learning is leading to the improved provision.

The sixth form offers an excellent curriculum. In addition to a wide range of Advanced level and Level 2 courses, sixth form education is enhanced by additional options such as language learning. Students have access to the same outstanding care, guidance and support as in the main school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rigour of monitoring to reduce the variation in performance between different subjects.

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
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------

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	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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2	

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	2	
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?	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	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
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	2	
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**

12 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Callington Community College, Callington PL17 7DR

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to let you know the judgements we have made about your college. Thank you for taking part in the inspection by talking to us about your work, your life in school and all you do. It was a privilege for us to visit your college. We believe your college is a good school and here are the reasons.

- The curriculum is outstanding. It is organised so that you maximise your chances of success in Year 11. The wide range of courses offered from Years 9 to 13 meet your needs and interests very well. This all helps you achieve well.
- You are extremely well cared for, supported and guided by very effective monitoring. The relationships between students and with your teachers are excellent, as is your behaviour. The school is very effective in helping you to be healthy and safe. You clearly enjoy school, make an excellent contribution to the community and are very well prepared for adult life.
- The special aspects of your school such as the music and sports specialisms, the training school and the international dimension all make a positive contribution to your education.
- Teaching is good. Your teachers help you to understand your work and usually provide a variety of activities to involve you in the lessons.

Whilst we judged your school to be good, the leaders of the school are keen for it to be even better. We have asked them to check the work of all departments to try to make all subjects as good as the best.

Yours faithfully

Adrian Lyons

Her Majesty's Inspector