

Ibstock Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120242
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327238
Inspection date	4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	0–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	625
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	31
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	6
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Davies
Headteacher	David King
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Central Avenue Ibstock LE67 6NE
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Age group	0–14
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well the learning needs of pupils of different abilities are being met in the classroom; how effectively the curriculum and care, guidance and support promote aspects of pupils' personal development and well being; and the effectiveness of the part played by governors and middle leaders in improving outcomes and securing improved outcomes for pupils. The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, discussions with students and staff, scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation, parental questionnaires and national assessment data. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Ibstock College became a specialist technology college in 2005. Pupils are mainly drawn from Ibstock and surrounding areas. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and a very low number are at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but the proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is higher than usual. The Ibstock Nursery and Family Centre is located on site and managed by the school governing body. The centre provides childcare before and after school as well as full day-care provision for children aged 0-4 years. The school has a Healthy Schools award, the Sportsmark and was reaccredited with Investors in People status in 2008. The school has the Financial Standard Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ibstock College is a good school which has made a number of significant improvements since its last inspection. Central to this improvement has been the college's development as a specialist technology college. As a result, the curriculum is outstanding. The developments within the three specialist subjects of design and technology, mathematics and science have raised standards across all subjects and boosted students' enjoyment of learning. Very effective partnerships with upper schools ensure that the transition to GCSE courses is smooth. There are very well planned opportunities for students to begin GCSE courses in Year 9 in science and complete a GCSE in statistics. Strong curriculum links with primary partners have contributed to improved standards in the specialist subjects on entry. There is a good emphasis on developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT), literacy and numeracy across all subjects. Students who begin a GCSE basic skills course in Years 8 and 9 have very effective additional support in developing basic and interpersonal skills. As a result, all students are well prepared for the next stages of their education and future lives. The college's citizenship programme is used well to promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Alongside other humanities subjects, it is used effectively to increase students' understanding of other communities, locally, nationally and elsewhere in the world. The considerable community use of the college site before, during and after the school day helps students to engage positively with the local community.

Achievement from Years 7 to 9 is good and contributes to students' positive enjoyment of school. Students enter the college with attainment that is broadly average. They make good progress and by the end of Year 9, standards are above average. Standards have risen in mathematics and science since the last inspection at a faster rate than the national picture. In science, standards have risen furthest, and students make outstanding progress. The first group of students to continue GCSE courses in science which were started at the college have gone on to attain above average standards at the upper school. The college's additional support to its most able students has resulted in greater numbers reaching the higher levels in assessments in 2008. Although achievement is good overall, there are still some differences between foundation subjects. The college has identified these differences and programmes are in place to bring about improvement. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are well met by effective teaching and additional support. The college sets challenging targets for its students which are very effectively communicated to them.

Teaching and learning are good and the amount of good and outstanding teaching is increasing. This is contributing to improved standards. There is detailed planning for lessons which have a clear structure. Learning objectives are shared clearly with students. Although most teachers plan to meet the range of abilities within their classes, there is not always a close match between teaching strategies and students' learning needs. As a result, not all are challenged to meet their full potential. Good practice seen during the inspection, where activities were well matched, included targeted questions to individuals and a range of well-matched resources. Most teachers use assessment strategies well to involve students in checking on their own progress and that of their peers. Relationships between members of the class are very positive and promote a good environment for learning. Both teachers and students make good use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support of students are good and, along with the curriculum, promote good personal development and well-being. Parents and students value the considerable support which staff give to students. This parent sums up the views of many: 'The school is good at recognising a child's potential, and gives help and support to enable that child to achieve to the best of their ability.' Tutors play a central role in providing guidance and support for learners. Students have very clear information about their challenging targets for each subject. The record of progress booklet helps them to keep track of their progress towards their targets. The college identifies effectively when students are underachieving and need additional support. Safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. There are a number of initiatives in place to improve attendance from a satisfactory level. As yet, attendance data is not being used well enough to give the school a clear picture of attendance patterns and, consequently, does not inform the accurate targeting of strategies for improvement.

Well-planned opportunities enable students to develop a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. Students have been involved in developing healthier options in the dining room and many take part in extra-curricular sport. Most students say they feel safe in college and they know where to turn to for help if they have problems. Although bullying happens from time to time, students feel confident that effective systems are in place to help them. A group of Year 9 students have trained as mentors and give valuable support to some Year 7 students who might otherwise feel vulnerable in their new setting. Opportunities such as these to take responsibility and help others in the community are really valued by the students who take part, but not all have the opportunity. However, large numbers of students are involved in innovative schemes to raise considerable sums for charity. Behaviour in classrooms is very good, but occasionally a few students behave boisterously at break-times. The college recognises this and gives effective additional support at these times to those who need it. The college has successfully reduced the number of exclusions from school by introducing a range of courses for students at risk. Good leadership and management at senior and middle leader levels have meant that a clear vision of the college's development as a specialist technology college has been shared with the college community. The college's development of extended provision, offering a crucial resource to diverse groups from under-fives to adult learners, has also been central to this vision. The Ibstock Nursery and Family Centre effectively meets a variety of needs of families in the surrounding locality. The college's governing body has undergone many changes recently, but new governors are quickly beginning to understand the complexities of the college's provision and are developing their skills well to be in a position to hold the college to account. Monitoring of the college's work by senior and middle leaders is detailed and rigorous and leads to an accurate evaluation of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The success of a range of initiatives introduced to raise standards and improve the curriculum, and the effectiveness of self-evaluation, contribute to the college's good capacity to improve further.

The large majority of questionnaires returned for the inspection were very positive about the college's work. They were particularly appreciative of the good quality of leadership and high levels of support and care for students which led to them making good progress. A small number of parents felt that the college did not take account of parents' and students' views. The inspection found many effective ways that students' views were sought on a wide range of topics. There is good developing practice across many subjects to seek students' views on the quality of teaching and learning. The college has identified a need to improve the communication links with parents, and has already started plans for this. Both parents and students spoke of the very useful planner which a number of parents use for regular communication.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The priority of nursery staff is to ensure the children are safe and that they enjoy their time in the setting. They are committed to providing the children with excellent care and support both in the babies' room and the Nursery. A good range of activities is offered in all areas of learning and, weather permitting, the children can explore similar activities outside. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's numeracy, speaking and listening skills. Every opportunity is taken to count and to ask questions. Consequently, children are confident to respond. New planning and assessment systems are being implemented. Both highlight the 'next steps' but, as yet, the assessment descriptions are general rather than specific. Personal and social skills are developing very well as children respond well to encouragement to take turns, wait patiently, to share and respect each other. In the babies' room, staff spend a lot of time talking to the children and encouraging them to explore different activities.

Children are happy and very well settled and enjoy their experiences. They particularly enjoy dressing up and acting out the nativity story. The songs chosen were sung with great gusto. The setting is well led by an enthusiastic manager who is supported by a very committed team. Parents have great confidence in the setting. This is reflected in their very positive comments such as, 'The staff have really brought my child out. She wouldn't speak before' and 'My child is disappointed when it's not a nursery day'. Liaison with the local infant school, where the majority of the nursery children go, is very good. All recommendations from the last report have been implemented. The setting also runs a before- and after-school club. Those who attend have a good time and enjoy themselves. Of the club members, only three are within the early years age group. Planning and assessment for this group is very limited. Despite this, the children are enjoying the club and are well looked after by the staff and the older children, who enjoy playing with them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve learning outcomes through a more consistent level of challenge across all subjects, particularly for the most able students.
- Improve attendance through a more systematic and rigorous use of data so that improvement strategies are more carefully targeted.
- Develop more opportunities for students to exercise responsibility both in school and the broader community so that greater numbers can be involved. And in the Ibstock Nursery and Family Centre:
- Ensure that specific next steps are included in assessment for Nursery children and that there is planning and assessment in place for children in the early years age group at the after-school club

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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

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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

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

5 December 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Ibstock Community College, Ibstock LE67 6NE

Thank you for the help you provided when we visited your college recently. We received a very warm welcome and your comments were very helpful to us. The quality of the education provided throughout the college is good, including for children in the Nursery. The quality has improved in a number of ways since the college's last inspection. This is because your college is well led by staff and because of its development as a specialist technology college. The impact of this has made the curriculum outstanding, something which you have gained a great deal of enjoyment from because it has made learning more interesting. You are well prepared through your courses at Ibstock College for your move to the upper schools.

The standard of your work is above average by the time you leave the college and your achievement is good. You understand how to lead a healthy lifestyle and many of you take part in sport and other activities to promote this. You feel safe at college and you are well cared for. Although a number of you take on responsibilities very conscientiously, like the college mentors, college councillors and 'SNAG' group representatives, we would like to see more of you having the opportunity to be involved in taking responsibility.

The teaching in college is good. You learn well when you are actively involved in activities. You know your targets in subjects and how you are progressing. In most lessons, you are set appropriate challenges but in some, a few of you could work at a more challenging level. We are asking your college to provide these challenges.

Although so much of what you do is good, your attendance is satisfactory. Many of you attend very well and we spoke to some who had never missed a day in three years. Some of you could attend more often and we are asking the college to work with you and your parents to make this happen.

You can help the college to improve even further by striving to do your very best and by helping your headteacher and his staff to put these improvements in place.

Yours sincerely

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector