

Crown Hills Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120277
Local Authority	Leicester City
Inspection number	327245
Inspection date	16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Ruth Westbrook

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 (total)	1213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iqbal Ismail
Headteacher	Bernadette Green
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2005
School address	Gwendolen Road Leicester LE5 5FT
Telephone number	01162 736893
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. During a one-day visit, the inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the college and investigated the following issues: the impact of strategies introduced to improve students' progress; how effectively teaching develops the learning of the most able students; and the contribution made by students to the college and wider community.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, discussions with students and staff, scrutiny of students' work and college documentation, parental questionnaires and national assessment data.

Other aspects of the college's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the college'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

This larger than average school became a specialist sports college in 2004. There are more boys than girls. The college community is culturally diverse. Nearly two thirds of students are from Indian backgrounds. Over 26 languages are spoken. About half the students speak English as an additional language. There are 35 at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The college has Leading Edge status, which means that its good practice is nationally recognised and is being shared with others. It has achieved Healthy School status, Sportsmark, Career Mark and Investors in People. The headteacher was appointed in September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good college has improved substantially since its last inspection. Its development as a specialist sports college has been an excellent driving force in this improvement. As a result, students enjoy college a great deal. Their attendance is excellent and their behaviour and attitudes to their work are positive. Learners' willingness to adopt healthy lifestyles is outstanding. Through its sports college status, excellent partnerships have been developed within the local community and further afield. Increasing numbers of students are taking advantage of the many opportunities to contribute to the community. For example, a group of Year 11 students have trained as football coaches and referees to support younger pupils in primary schools and those in a partner special school. Through its specialism, the college has developed an excellent range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. These make a good contribution towards students' good personal development and well-being.

Good leadership and management at all levels have been the other main driving force in the college's improvement. Senior leaders have successfully shared their vision to raise the achievement of all students. Since her appointment, the headteacher has given very clear direction on how this should move forward, and has very effectively shared this with other leaders in the college. The headteacher has led improvements to the college's self-evaluation procedures. The success of a range of initiatives has contributed to its good capacity to improve. Self-evaluation has clearly identified strengths and weaknesses and set the college's agenda for improvement in the development plan. Evaluation has been enhanced by taking into account the views of students on their teaching and learning. Heads of faculties display a growing confidence in their use of data and its analysis. Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Governors are knowledgeable about the college's work. They have a good understanding of its context within its community and its strengths and weaknesses. This enables them to hold the college's leadership to account.

There has been a substantial improvement in standards since the last inspection. Achievement from Years 7 to 11 is good. Students join the college with levels of attainment that are below average. By the end of Year 11 they attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations for five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C and five or more grades at A* to G. This represents good progress. GCSE results improved substantially in 2007 and this overall improvement has been maintained in 2008. In 2007, results in Year 9 national tests were below average overall but there was variation across subjects. Results were average in English, below average in mathematics and exceptionally low in science. In 2008 tests, unvalidated results show that, although standards remain below average, there has been an overall improvement in science and in all three subjects at the higher levels. The achievement of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Students at an early stage of learning English make good progress. Throughout the school, standards in the school's specialist subject, physical education, have improved in the last two years. The introduction of a more engaging curriculum has contributed to the improvement. The targets set for all students are at a challenging level to promote good or better progress. Students know their targets. Their progress is rigorously checked, and effective intervention programmes are in place for students who are not on track.

Teaching and learning are good overall, and the amount of good and outstanding teaching is increasing. This is contributing to improved standards. There is a calm atmosphere in lessons, built around very positive relationships amongst students and staff. Teachers plan lessons carefully and provide a wide range of activities and resources. Lesson plans take good account

of the need to develop literacy skills and motivate boys to achieve. 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 achieve their full potential. Good practice seen during the inspection, where activities were well matched and included careful input by the teacher, targeted questions to individuals and a range of well-matched resources. The college's specialist status has contributed to improvement by supporting the development of strategies used across all subjects to involve students in their learning and through the provision of resources that motivate boys. However, in a few lessons, students spend too long listening to the teacher. This reduces opportunities for students to develop their learning by discussing their work with others or by reflecting on a question together. Most students receive good feedback on their work in a variety of ways and this is helpful to them in reaching their targets. The college is addressing the inconsistencies that remain in the quality of feedback by sharing good practice on assessment.

The college is sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of its diverse community. Students value this diversity. They take good advantage of the planned and informal opportunities within the good curriculum to learn about other students' cultures and backgrounds. This contributes to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are tolerant and understand individual rights and responsibilities. They feel confident to challenge racism on the rare occasions that it occurs. The re-introduction last year of a musical show is a good example of the college's commitment to involve all groups of students in a collaborative project and build a good sense of being part of one community.

Good care, guidance and support systems are in place to safeguard students. They say they feel safe in school. They know where to turn to for help if they have problems and value the learning enhancement centre (LEC) for this purpose. The college has established very effective systems to support vulnerable students and those at risk of exclusion. There has been a sharp fall in exclusions as a result. Strategies to monitor attendance and punctuality have been successfully implemented, with significant improvements to both. The life skills programme is taught effectively across all year groups by experienced staff. Almost all students leave to positive destinations from Year 11, well equipped with the academic skills and personal attributes for their future lives. Students at an early stage of learning English receive good support to enable them to settle in the college and learn the language. The recent restructuring of learning support has ensured that all students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have access to specialist teaching and a personalised curriculum.

There was a larger than usual return of questionnaires from parents in response to the inspection. The vast majority are very positive, recognising the good level of care, guidance and support that the college provides. The comment, 'Crown Hills is a good school and is safe and well led and managed' is typical of parental expressions of confidence. A small minority of parents feel the college could do more to take the views of students into account. The college has a good number of systems in place that seek the views of students. Students are able to give many examples of initiatives that have been implemented at their suggestion like the recent developments to facilities for prayer.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that planned teaching strategies are matched closely to the learning needs of the students to maximise their progress. Share the good practice that exists within the school.
- Increase students' participation in their learning by planning structured opportunities for group and paired discussion in lessons.

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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	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	2
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	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

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

17 September 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Crown Hills Community College, Leicester, LE5 5FT

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. It has improved since the college's last inspection, three years ago. That is because your college is well led by your headteacher, governors and other senior staff. The development as a sports college has also contributed significantly to this improvement

The standard of your work is average by the time you leave school from a below average starting point, so your achievement is good. You have an excellent understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. So many of you are involved in exercise and try hard to eat healthily. Your attendance is excellent. You enjoy school and behave well and there are good relationships between you and the adults who support your learning. You feel safe at school and you are cared for well. Your curriculum provides you with many opportunities to achieve in many different ways. We were impressed with the way everyone gets on so well in your diverse community and with how you enjoy learning about each other's cultures and backgrounds.

The teaching is good. You enjoy lessons when there are activities with which you can engage. I think that your learning would improve if you had more opportunities to talk about your work with others. Although most teachers recognise the different needs of the learners within a classroom, sometimes tasks are not at the right level and some of you are not challenged to reach your full potential. I have asked the college to put these things in place.

You can help your college to improve even further by striving to do your very best in this year's tests and examinations and by helping your headteacher and staff to put these improvements in place.

With best wishes

Ruth Westbrook Lead inspector