

John Cleveland College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120299
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327251
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Dilip Kadodwala HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act. The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	14–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1666
Sixth form	472
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	48
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	14
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Vivienne Mangiante
Headteacher	Mr Alastair Macqueen
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	20 April 2007
Date of previous childcare inspection	20 April 2007
School address	Butt Lane Hinckley Leicestershire LE10 1LE
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 41 lessons, and held meetings with staff, governors and groups of students. They observed the college's work, and looked at a range of college documents, including 76 parent, 68 staff and 745 student questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The progress made by students in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, including that of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and lower attaining boys.
- The effectiveness of strategies implemented to improve students' behaviour and engagement, including changes made to the curriculum.
- The effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation in identifying the action to be taken to bring about improvement in weaker subjects or teaching.

Information about the school

John Cleveland College is much larger than most secondary schools. The great majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The college has specialist status in science and has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, Artsmark Gold, International Schools Award and Healthy Schools status.

The college is also responsible for the Happy Days Nursery which is housed in a separate unit. This was inspected at the same time as the college. The Nursery has a class for each age group from age 2 to 4. Government funding is provided for 34 of the children aged 3 to 4.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

- In 2008, GCSE results in English, mathematics and science were above average. Students' achievement from their starting points is satisfactory.
- The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. Students' attainment is average and they make satisfactory progress. Achievement in sociology and psychology is outstanding.
- The college is making a significant impact raising achievement by supporting identified students through mentoring and targeted programmes.
- Specialist status in science is benefiting the students and the local community, including local schools. The school was close to meeting the challenging science specialist targets in 2008 and it is well on course to exceed these in 2009.
- The curriculum is satisfactory but better provision in Year 10 results in greater enjoyment of learning.
- Students' behaviour is satisfactory and attendance is improving. Staff work hard to improve the attendance of a group of persistent absentees but there remains a small core group of students who do not attend regularly.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with some that is good or better. The quality of assessment is good. Increasingly, students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through well designed assignments. However, students are not always actively engaged in their own learning and activities do not always meet students' different needs.
- Governance is satisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities and are rigorous in ensuring that students and staff are safe. Safeguarding procedures are robust.
- The senior leadership team has experienced some significant changes in the last two years but is now stable. Senior managers provide strong leadership but the effectiveness of middle managers is inconsistent because their accountability roles are underdeveloped.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is effective and children get off to a flying start in a calm, secure and caring environment. However, a system for measuring children's progress is underdeveloped.
- The college's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory because there is a reasonable trend of improvement in the college's overall performance, including since the last inspection.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Raise achievement so that students make the expected progress by:

- improving teaching so that learning consistently meets the needs of different groups of learners
- using a broader range of strategies to engage students, particularly boys, so that students are more actively involved in their own learning.

Improve the quality of middle leadership by:

- implementing further support for middle leaders so that they are more effective and accountable for students' progress.

Improve assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

- identifying children's developmental stages when they start in the playgroup and using observations and assessments to track their progress.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

Achievement is satisfactory. Students enter the college having attained above average standards. By the end of Year 11, the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics is above average. Students also attain above average GCSE results at grade C and above in all of the core subjects, and perform particularly well in the science specialist subject. That said, GCSE results in 2008 showed significant underachievement for boys, lower attainers and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, linked to the college's previously narrow approach to the curriculum. A new range of vocational and applied courses is making a significant impact in closing these achievement gaps. All groups of students, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are now making satisfactory progress. The school recognises the need to increase the proportion of higher attaining students reaching A* grades in most subjects.

Enjoyment of learning is satisfactory, as is students' behaviour. Some parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that a minority of students do not behave well, and a small amount of immature behaviour was observed by inspectors. The work of the behavioural support unit is making a significant impact on improving behaviour in lessons. Students say they feel safe in college and this is confirmed by the majority of parents. Students move around the buildings and the site sensibly and calmly. Bullying and racist incidents are rare and are dealt with promptly and appropriately. Cultural differences are celebrated and students recognise the importance of understanding how others live and their beliefs. Students contribute well to the

college and the local community and willingly take on responsibilities. They feel that their views are heard, although they say that they are not always acted on. Attendance is satisfactory. Students develop satisfactory skills and knowledge which will be of use in their adult life. Most students are aware of how to live healthily and this is evident in the high participation in extra-curricular sports clubs and activities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	3
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

The quality of the school's work

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Better teaching uses varied, engaging methods that provide suitable challenge. Students are encouraged to work collaboratively and most do so with maturity and enthusiasm. Teachers keep a careful check on students' progress against targets through regular and rigorous assessment. Effective self- and peer assessment exercises are a feature in many lessons, and in these, students are encouraged to reflect carefully on what they need to do to reach their target grades. The quality of day-to-day marking varies across subjects. At its best, marking makes effective links between the quality of students' work and the targets they are aiming for, setting out clearly where work needs to improve. For example, marking in English is very detailed and students respond well in significantly improving the quality of their written work. Weaker marking involves just a tick and brief comment and students' work remains incomplete. Although teachers' planning identifies groups of students who have different needs, activities are not always planned well enough to match. In particular, while raising the achievement of boys is a priority, teachers do not always actively draw them into discussions or ensure that they are working at sufficient pace and in enough detail. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but teachers are not always aware of these students' targets.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but good for students in Year 10 because of

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

significant improvements to the range of vocational courses on offer. The impact has yet to be fully seen in examination results but there is increasing evidence of improved behaviour and attitudes to learning. Courses offered off site reflect strong partnership with other providers and alternative short courses in college help to meet the needs of students at risk of becoming disaffected. There is a satisfactory range of activities specifically for gifted and talented students. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which are popular with students.

Support, guidance and care are satisfactory. Transition is smooth because of good links with the high schools. The large reduction in the number of exclusions is the result of various strategies to provide alternatives to dealing with students at risk. Staff work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure these students continue with their education. Fewer students miss lessons or fall behind with their work. The recently introduced progress days are successful in engaging with parents. Although students who are having difficulties with their learning are correctly identified, the plans which spell out the next steps in learning for them lack clarity and are not always shared with all those who teach them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	3
Support, guidance and care	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders rigorously monitor the school and this provides them with a secure view of its strengths and weaknesses. They have strong ambition and set realistic and challenging targets to reverse the trend of underachievement. The impact of this is evident in the satisfactory progress made by different groups of learners. This also reflects staff commitment to the promotion of equality of opportunity. Improvement planning identifies the right priorities but the criteria for evaluating the impact of actions lack detail. The role of subject leaders in demonstrating their accountability is underdeveloped; hence the effectiveness of middle management is inconsistent. Partnerships with other schools and organisations are satisfactory overall, although there are some good aspects such as the use of the science specialism. There is a detailed understanding of community cohesion among staff and students' awareness of different communities is strong because of the college's national and international links. However, links with local, multicultural communities are insufficiently developed. Governors provide good support and satisfactory challenge. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding procedures were implemented rigorously and fully met requirements. Resources are used carefully and value for money is satisfactory, as reflected in students' overall outcomes.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	3
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	3
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Happy Days Playgroup provides an effective setting which enables children to make good progress in personal and academic development. The children's welfare is at the heart of the provision. Safeguarding procedures are in place and effective. Parents are confident that their child is safe and happy and feel that they are well informed. Children work together well and show growing confidence. The staff are well qualified and use children's interests to plan activities. Learning is promoted well through a balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated tasks. There is strong emphasis on extending children's language skills and well chosen questions prompt children to express their ideas.

Leadership of the playgroup is good. Recommendations from the previous inspection have been addressed well. There are effective partnerships with staff in other settings and with the teachers in the schools to which children transfer. The staff have taken on the new requirements for the education of these young children well. They make observations of children's important steps in learning and these are used well to plan the next activities. All key workers are involved in monitoring but at present there is not an effective system by which staff can evaluate children's progress. The move to the new mobile classroom has given greater space and improved facilities, although the outside area has yet to be fully developed.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. The curriculum offers a large number of A-level courses and the breadth of vocational programmes is contributing to the increase in student numbers. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While lessons provide a vigorous stimulus to students' academic understanding and learning, some teaching does not sufficiently promote critical, constructive dialogue and independent learning. Students themselves adopt a mature attitude to their work and take responsibility for their own progress. Good assessment and guidance help them make satisfactory progress against their target grades. There are pockets of outstanding achievement in sociology and psychology. From average GCSE standards on entry, students' final A-level grades are also at the national average. Students' personal development is good. They enjoy their work, take exercise to keep healthy and most make a contribution to help others in the community. Sixth form managers provide sound leadership, having identified the important improvements that were needed and introduced positive changes to the provision.

Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3
The overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of the 76 parents who responded to the questionnaire are satisfied with the college. They particularly agree that their child enjoys school and that the college keeps them safe. Just over a half agree that they are kept informed of students' progress but there are criticisms about the recent change from parents' evenings to student progress days which enables parents to meet with tutors rather than subject teachers. However, parental attendance to the progress days has increased significantly compared to the relatively lower turn out at parental evenings and subject staff are accessible to parents at other times. Where parents have criticised the effectiveness of dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour, inspection findings suggest that the strategies used to deal with this issue are increasingly successful. The majority of students who returned questionnaires agree that they enjoy school and that they know how well they are doing in their work. Of the 68 staff who responded to the questionnaire, almost all are proud to work at the college, understand its aims and feel that it runs smoothly. The majority endorsed the other areas of the college's work.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007–8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007–8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007–8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007–8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment: the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement: an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- Capacity to improve: the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management: the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



12 February 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of John Cleveland College, Butts Lane, Hinckley LE10 1LE

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome and the courtesy you showed us when we visited your college. We enjoyed our discussions with you and particular thanks to the 745 of you who returned questionnaires. This letter is to tell you about the outcomes of the inspection. Your college is providing a satisfactory quality of education. The main findings are as follows.

- Achievement is satisfactory, reflecting the sound progress that is made from your high national test results in Year 9.
- Results at GCSE, including in English and mathematics, are above average. The college's science specialism also produces good results and has brought many benefits to the college and to the local community.
- The 2008 GCSE results indicated that some groups of students had underachieved, specifically boys and those who have learning difficulties. The staff are tackling this weakness well by monitoring current students' performance and ensuring that everyone makes the expected progress.
- Behaviour is satisfactory overall, having improved because of a more suitable curriculum and more effective action to deal with unacceptable behaviour.
- Attendance is improving and is satisfactory, although a minority of you are persistently absent from college. The majority of you enjoy learning and participate well in the extra-curricular activities offered.
- You say that you feel safe and the college is good at ensuring that safeguarding checks are robust.
- College leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior leaders are deeply committed, as are staff, to improving the quality of education that you receive.

We have asked the senior leaders to make the following improvements to raise achievement.

- Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that all teachers plan their lessons to match the work to the different needs and abilities of students in the class.
- Ensure that teaching gains your interest and engagement, particularly that of the boys, so that you are all actively involved in your own learning.
- Ensure that all subject leaders carry out their duties to monitor and analyse your performance consistently across the college.

Yours sincerely

Dilip Kadodwala
Her Majesty's Inspector

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