

Clevedon Community School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 132006 |
| Local Authority | North Somerset |
| Inspection number | 328661 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Christopher Russell 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.

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| Type of school | Comprehensive |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 11–18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 1233 |
| Sixth form | 180 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr G Blakeman |
| Headteacher | Mr J Wells |
| Date of previous school inspection | 14–15 March 2006 |
| School address | Valley Road Clevedon BS21 6AH |
| Telephone number | 01275 876744 |
| Fax number | 01275 340935 |
| Email address | office@clevedon.n-somerset.sch.uk |

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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited approximately 50 lessons and held meetings with staff, governors, students and a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including approximately 150 parental questionnaires.

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

- Attainment, learning and progress, particularly:
 - the progress of different groups: boys and girls; different ability groups; students with English as an additional language
 - achievement in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching and learning, and the extent to which lessons meet the needs of all students.
- The systems and processes that leaders use to monitor, develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

Clevedon Community School is larger than the average secondary school. It has specialist status as a language college. The vast majority of students are White British. The proportion of students with English as an additional language, although still very small, has risen in recent years. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. The attainment of students on entry to the school is slightly above the national average.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Clevedon School has made major strides forward in the three years since its last inspection. While its overall effectiveness has not changed, there have been improvements across a wide range of areas: many aspects of the school's work are now good and some are outstanding. Making these improvements has not been easy. The headteacher and his senior colleagues have had to deal with some tough issues, such as a large budget deficit and a significant proportion of inadequate teaching, but they have done so with resolute determination and considerable success. Much has been achieved and everything is in place to support the school's further improvement. In particular:

- Leaders are extremely ambitious for the school.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of the areas that require further improvement.
- Much is being done to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Strong systems and processes are in place to support the school's work; these are applied rigorously.

One of the areas that has improved the most is the sixth form: the quality of sixth form teaching has improved rapidly and students now achieve more. There have also been major improvements to the support, guidance and care that the school provides – this is now a significant strength. The curriculum is developing well and a number of recent changes have widened opportunities, particularly at Key Stage 4.

Widespread improvements are leading to better outcomes for students. Students, for example, now make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. There are many opportunities for students to get involved and even take a lead in a range of activities, many emanating from the introduction of the school's new house system.

There are two reasons why inspectors judged the school's overall effectiveness to be satisfactory rather than good.

- *Variability in the quality of teaching and learning.* Lessons have improved: few if any are now inadequate, many are good and a few are outstanding. The overall picture, however, is variable and a significant proportion of satisfactory lessons remain. The quality of marking and feedback to students is also variable and, in many cases, students are given insufficiently sharp and specific guidance about how to improve their work.

- *The impact that this variability has on students' academic progress, achievement and enjoyment of learning.* While students are making expected progress as they move from Year 7 to 11, the overall profile of teaching and learning is not yet strong enough to enable them to make good progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons and accelerate students' progress by:

- developing greater opportunities for independent, creative and collaborative learning to foster motivation and improve student progress
- ensuring that teachers consistently use assessment data more extensively when planning their lessons so that work matches the needs of individual students more closely
- ensuring that marking provides students with clear advice about how to improve their work.
- developing strategies to spread the existing good practice within the school.

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

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- Students' learning, progress and achievement are improving, although they are not yet consistently good. Students are well motivated and they generally enjoy learning. They concentrate, listen well and collaborate very effectively with each other in pairs and groups.
- GCSE results improved in 2008: students' attainment was slightly above national averages. These students made satisfactory progress overall, although progress in mathematics was low. Students' achievement in mathematics has improved significantly in the past year.
- Students behave well and incidents of disruptive behaviour are rare. Students say that they feel safe in school and that, while some bullying does occur, staff work diligently to follow it up and deal with it.
- All students, including boys and girls, students of differing abilities, and students with English as an additional language, make similar progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| 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 |

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

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| How well do pupils behave? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles? | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community? | 1 |
| Pupils' attendance | 2 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development? | 2 |

The quality of the school's work

- Students receive comprehensive and well targeted support, guidance and care. The introduction of a house system, with students from different year groups mixed together in the same tutor group, has made a significant contribution to improvement in this area.
- Systems to set targets for students and to track their progress are well developed. The information that the systems generate is used well to identify students who could achieve more. However, teachers often make insufficient use of this information when they plan their lessons.
- Inspectors saw some superb learning, where lesson activities were varied, imaginative and designed to challenge and interest every student. Much is being done to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning. For example, teachers now base their lessons on a shared model – the Clevedon Lesson; this is helpful in that it provides a clear framework.
- Less effective lessons typically have the following characteristics.
 - Planning that is not based sufficiently on students' targets and current attainment.
 - A lack of variety in learning activities. As a result, activities do not match the needs of all students and not everyone is sufficiently challenged and interested.
 - A lack of pace. The lesson moves slowly and time is not used efficiently.
- Some marking is very helpful, but much is of limited value and simply confirms that students have completed work, corrects what they have written, or provides general comments.
- The curriculum is developing well. While the range of vocational options is still fairly limited, it is increasing rapidly. Curriculum changes have been considered carefully to ensure that they are manageable and match students' needs and interests very closely. Plans are well underway for further developments to the curriculum in September 2009.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| 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 | 2 |
| Support, guidance and care | 1 |

How effective are leadership and management?

- The headteacher, ably supported by a strong senior leadership team, has set a very clear vision for the school and has successfully driven through a wide range of improvements in a relatively short time. Senior leaders quite rightly see making improvements to teaching and learning as their main priority. Effective systems and processes are in place in this area. Robust action has been taken to eliminate inadequate teaching.
- Staff understand and subscribe to this vision and ambition, and morale is high. A staff questionnaire was piloted as part of this inspection and responses were, almost without exception, very positive.
- Governors play a strong role in the school: they are frequent visitors, have a thorough understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses, and hold leaders to account when they need to.
- Due regard is given to the need to safeguard students and to promote equality of opportunity. Comprehensive and robust procedures are in place in these areas. The school liaises very closely with the parents of vulnerable students to ensure that they receive appropriate support.
- The school does much to promote community cohesion. It has, for example been instrumental in setting up the Clevedon Cluster Council, which involves students and members of the local community. Developmental themes have included ‘staying safe in Clevedon’ and have led to tangible improvements within the local area. The school’s status as a language college has also made a significant contribution here: the school provides extensive support for language learning in local schools and the wider community.
- Leaders have successfully balanced the need to make improvements with the need to reduce the school’s budget deficit. The school is on track to eliminate the deficit completely in the next couple of years.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| Communicating ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Promoting the school’s relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being | 2 |
| Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services | 2 |
| Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion | 2 |
| Deploying resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Sixth form

- The sixth form is a real success story. Leaders and managers have made considerable improvements to sixth form provision and outcomes.
- Sixth form lessons are varied, with many opportunities for students to work independently and with each other. The overall quality of teaching and learning is now better than in the rest of the school, with more good and outstanding lessons
- Outcomes have also improved and students' achievement is now good. A-level results improved significantly in 2007 and, given their GCSE results, these students made more progress in the sixth form than students taking examinations in 2006. While results fell slightly in 2008, these students had, on average, lower GCSE results and their progress was similar to the previous year.

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| Outcomes for students in the sixth form | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the sixth form | 2 |
| Leadership and management of the sixth form | 2 |
| The overall effectiveness of the sixth form | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers that replied to the questionnaire was slightly below average. The very large majority of those that did reply were very positive about the school. There were many comments about the school's improvement in the past few years and many acknowledged the personal contribution of the headteacher. A small number of parents reported concerns. Comments covered a range of areas, but the most common theme was concern about variations in the quality of lessons. This is in line with the judgement of the inspection team.

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| 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

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| 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. |



13 March 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Clevedon Community School, Clevedon, BS21 6AH

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to you to tell you about our main findings.

We found that many things have improved in the last few years.

- You are very well cared for and supported by the school.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form has been developed so that you have more choice of subjects.
- You make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community.
- We saw no inadequate lessons.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school.
- The way in which the school sets targets for you and monitors your progress is well developed.

The main reason why inspectors judged the school to be satisfactory rather than good overall is the quality of teaching and learning. This area is clearly improving: many lessons are now good and some are outstanding. However, the overall quality of lessons is variable. Some lessons do not move at a rapid enough pace and activities do not always match your particular needs or challenge you sufficiently. This means that some lessons are not very enjoyable and this limits the progress that you are able to make. We also found marking to be very variable: while some is good, a lot of marking does not give you specific enough advice about how to improve your work. We have asked the school to work on these areas.

The headteacher and other staff are very ambitious for the school and are working hard to make Clevedon an excellent school in the future. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, and understand what to do next to continue the school's improvement.

Yours sincerely

Chris Russell
Her Majesty's Inspector

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