

Hameldon Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134995
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	329004
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Marguerite McCloy HMI

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)	885
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Pickles
Headteacher	Ms Gill Broom
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2007
School address	Byron Street Burnley Lancashire BB12 6NU
Telephone number	01282 775111
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Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	3–4 June 2009
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Introduction

When Hameldon College was inspected in February 2007 it was judged to require special measures because it provided an unsatisfactory standard of education. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) subsequently visited the college on five occasions to monitor its progress.

The college was re-inspected on 3 and 4 June 2009 by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Hameldon College was opened in September 2006 following the amalgamation of two secondary schools as part of the Building Schools for the Future initiative in Burnley. Hameldon is a slightly smaller than average community school, as the number of students on roll has gradually reduced since its opening. This is in preparation for the move to a new building in September 2010, which will have capacity for 750 students. The college currently occupies a larger site which incorporates the buildings of the two predecessor schools. It has a 20-place additionally resourced provision for hearing impaired students.

The college is situated in an area characterised by above average levels of social and economic disadvantage, although the number of students eligible for free school meals is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of those for whom English is an additional language, is similar to the national average. This group of students are mainly of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage.

Hameldon is a specialist college for business, enterprise and science.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that Hameldon College no longer requires special measures. Hameldon is providing a satisfactory and improving education for its students.

The quality of care, guidance and support for students is a strength of the college and the inclusion of all learners is at the heart of its ethos. With the support of a wide range of partnerships and outside agencies, vulnerable students or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for. The provision within the college for hearing impaired students is very good. The centre is well managed and skilled staff ensure that students are well supported to enjoy and participate fully in mainstream lessons with their peers. As a result, these students make good progress and often maintain contact to have continued support from the centre after leaving Hameldon.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. The college works hard to remove barriers to learning, but some students and their families find it difficult to raise their aspirations and develop a positive view of the importance of education, including attendance and punctuality. The college's specialism makes an effective contribution to promoting the social and workplace skills that are essential to future economic well-being. For example, students enjoy the enrichment activities and themed events which focus on developing business and enterprise skills.

Although standards of attainment are just below national averages, achievement is satisfactory across the college for all groups of learners, with pockets of good progress now evident. A rising trend is indicated by the detailed tracking systems which monitor every student's performance, not only in academic learning, but also in their personal development.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and many lessons are good, although not consistently enough to challenge students to progress at a more rapid pace. Relationships between teachers and students are positive although inspectors noted some inappropriate behaviour from a small minority of students. Teachers are keen to improve their skills and a strong sense of teamwork exists as good practice is shared and professional development opportunities are planned appropriately.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. For example, honest and accurate self-evaluation leads to rigorous planning for improvement. The college's monitoring and analysis of the performance of individual subjects and groups of students provides leaders with a clear view of particular successes or areas for development. Appropriate action is then taken to remedy weaknesses, and the impact of this is checked over time. The governing body is well led and governors make a good contribution to the work of the college.

The road to improvement since its last inspection has been particularly challenging for the college due to a number of setbacks occurring along the way. The college has worked hard to rise above its previously negative image locally, and signs of success are emerging as staff and students look beyond special measures, to the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise students' aspirations and improve their personal development, particularly attitudes to learning and attendance.

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching and ensure that expectations are consistently high in challenging students to improve their work.
- Build on recent improvements to further raise standards across the college and increase the proportion of students achieving higher levels or grades.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

A significant proportion of students enter the college with below average levels of attainment. All groups of learners are making at least satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 3. Overall attainment at Key Stage 4 is just below national averages. This represents satisfactory progress, based on the prior attainment of those students. This view was borne out in lesson observations during the inspection, where students were making satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their work.

The college's most recent assessments, including modular tests and coursework, indicate that challenging targets set for Year 11 students in 2009 are attainable. Following lower than expected results in 2008 that fell well short of the college's targets, leaders took action to remedy issues that affected mathematics grades in particular. The college's data indicates that students are now on course to improve their results in all key performance measures and also increase the proportion achieving A* to C grades in GCSE English and mathematics. Results in the college's specialist subjects of science, business studies and information and communication technology (ICT) have not been meeting its targets. Some improvement was evident in the 2008 examinations and current data indicates further improvement in 2009.

There are clear signs of satisfactory and sometimes good progress being sustained across all years and for particular student groups, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and minority ethnic groups. Effective support for students who speak English as an additional language also ensures that they make similar progress to their peers.

The proportion of more able students reaching the highest levels and grades in their assessments and examinations is below average. Leaders recognise that this is a key area for development now that the legacy of underachievement over the last few years is being eradicated. In fact, the number of Year 11 students on track to achieve A* to B grades already shows a good increase from last year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Students' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Students generally enjoy their time at the college and there is a high take-up of the wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities. The large majority of students have positive attitudes to their learning and are polite and friendly. However, on occasions the behaviour of a small number of students is not good enough, and this is often the result of their deliberate efforts to gain attention and undermine the improvements the college has made. There are a few occasions when behaviour is weaker where teaching lacks challenge and pace, or teachers do not act quickly enough to apply sanctions according to the college's clear

guidelines. Surveys of students' views confirm that they generally feel safe in the college, know who to turn to if they feel bullied or threatened, and believe that incidents will be dealt with fairly.

Students are aware of how to lead healthy lifestyles and they enjoy the two hours of curriculum time allocated each week to good quality physical education. They develop appropriate knowledge about a range of health issues through their 'learning for life' lessons. Students are provided with healthy food options at lunchtime, although some still consume unhealthy snacks and sweet, fizzy drinks at break and lunchtimes. Despite the college's strenuous efforts and close monitoring, attendance remains stubbornly below average, sometimes because it is condoned by a minority of parents. Small but optimistic signs of improvement are evident. Punctuality to school and to lessons is also improving due to the college's more rigorous enforcement of sanctions in addition to its rewards and incentives for good punctuality and attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, and just over half of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better, although few were outstanding. The college recognises that this proportion needs to rise in order to accelerate the pace of learning, as the attitudes and personal development of some students are not yet matching the efforts being made by most teachers. Teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects, and lesson planning is good because the college's common format and expectations are clear. Students are given guidance about what they are to learn and what is expected of them by the end of the lesson. Plans include an appropriate variety of tasks to meet students' different learning needs and ensure they make at least satisfactory progress. In lessons where this is translated well into classroom practice for students of different abilities, they make good progress, but this is not fully consistent across or within all subject departments. Interactive whiteboard technology is used well in many lessons to enhance presentations and promote students' interest.

In the best lessons, the pace of learning is brisk and teachers challenge students well, setting high expectations of how they are to demonstrate what they have learned. Students are actively engaged in a balance of paired or group work, independent tasks and assessing each other's work. In these lessons, teachers make good use of national curriculum levels or grade criteria so that students know what they have to do to achieve these. Well focused questioning promotes students' thinking skills and motivates them to attempt higher level work and deepen their understanding.

In less successful lessons, the teaching lacks a sense of urgency and students are not as fully involved. Sometimes teachers direct the learning too much and some students become accustomed to doing the minimum amount of work themselves. This then shows in the variability of presentation and content in books, and reflects a lack of pride in their work. On occasions when a small minority of students display negative attitudes or behaviour, this is generally challenged well by teachers to avoid disruption to the lesson.

Where teachers' marking is regular and effective it provides students with clear steps to improve their work and move closer to their targets. However, this is not fully embedded or consistent across the college.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with emerging strengths. At both key stages it is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Good initiatives at Key Stage 3, for example, the reading recovery and study plus interventions, have been effective in increasing the rate of progress for some students. Good support is in place for those students who are vulnerable or at risk. Clear plans to build on these successes and further develop the curriculum to improve students' study and work skills and promote their personal development are appropriate and well underway.

In Years 10 and 11, the range of vocational and academic subjects suits the needs and aspirations of most students across the full attainment range. The 'learning for life' curriculum incorporates personal and social development and careers information. Together with enterprise days led by the college's specialist subjects, these contribute successfully to improving students' understanding of healthy lifestyles, responsible citizenship and careers pathways. The current Year 9 students are very appreciative of, and looking forward to, the improved Key Stage 4 offer from September 2009 which provides a good range of personal pathways for all students.

A wide range of enrichment activities complements the curriculum and the school is making strenuous efforts to reach out to the community through these. These activities make an important contribution to students' personal development. Good links with local businesses support work experience and the school is building on such links to extend the work-related curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The college provides good care, guidance and support, which are enhanced by the fact that many staff know the students and their individual needs well. A number of initiatives, some in conjunction with a range of external partners, support very well those students who have additional needs or are more vulnerable: for example, the learning support and hearing impaired centres, nurture group, the senior attendance officer and home-college liaison office, to name but a few. The college's work with external agencies helps to support students who display challenging behaviour and/or persistent absenteeism. For example, partnership working with a local centre enables a group of Key Stage 3 students who have had a number of fixed-term exclusions to remain in education. They currently have alternative provision at the centre on one or two days each week and their progress is monitored by the college.

Systems to track the progress students are making are robust and attainment information is collected and carefully reviewed at regular intervals throughout the academic year. Students and their parents are kept informed about progress. Most students are aware of their target levels and grades and how to achieve these, but this is not consistent across all subjects and classes.

Child protection procedures and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are regularly reviewed. The work of well-being coordinators, teaching assistants, progress and development managers and the college inclusion team make an effective contribution to the level of care

provided for students. The college has developed good links with primary schools which help the transition process into Year 7. Guidance on course options and careers helps students to make informed choices about their future. Good monitoring of students' personal development allows early intervention and targeted support for those who need it.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is a committed and determined leader who has demonstrated great strength of character in managing the very difficult first three years of the college's existence. The path of improvement has been uneven at times, affected by significant staffing and reorganisation issues due to the reducing numbers of students on roll.

The headteacher is well supported by an effective senior leadership team, and all are aware of what needs to be done to improve standards further across the college. Expectations of what is required are appropriate and based on accurate evaluation of the college's current performance. Clear and robust systems are communicated well throughout the college, for example, in the calendars which guide evaluation activities. There is a regular programme of departmental reviews, learning walks, work sampling and student interviews. This enables leaders to evaluate the impact of the college's actions and adjust improvement plans to meet its changing needs. Middle leaders are fully involved in monitoring activities, supported by the clear guidance and expectations of the senior team. A number of middle leaders have developed their confidence and skill in this role particularly well, understanding that they are accountable for improving the performance of their departments. Leadership of the college's specialism is satisfactory and improving. The deputy headteacher currently covering the role during a staff absence is ensuring that business and enterprise continues to develop a high profile across the work of the college.

The college has a satisfactory plan for community cohesion which is based on the needs of the school's population. Useful partnerships exist with local community groups to promote positive relationships between students from different backgrounds. Arrangements are being put into place for governors to monitor the impact of the college's equalities and community cohesion polices now that these have been reviewed and agreed. The college regularly seeks the views of parents, both through questionnaires and 'drop in' sessions in the community. Although just a small minority take up these opportunities, there are signs that parents are feeling more positive about the college and have fewer concerns about students' behaviour than in the past. This was also reflected in the inspection questionnaires, but only nine were submitted by the end of the inspection.

The college has positive relationships with local authority advisers and subject consultants who have provided good support and monitored its progress over the last two years. This has helped to develop the college's capacity to improve, which is satisfactory but has clear strengths. The results of the work of leaders, governors and staff can be seen on a number of fronts. For example, while attendance and behaviour are not yet what the college would want them to be, improvement is evident. The proportion of teaching which is now good or better is evidence of the impact of the college's well focused efforts to 'raise the bar' in the quality of its provision. The area in which its considerable efforts have been slower to demonstrate impact is in students' standards of attainment and overall achievement.

Governors are fully involved in, and knowledgeable about, the college's work. They are well informed and are able to hold the college to account for its performance and make a good contribution to evaluation and improvement planning. Alongside the headteacher, governors have managed a period of significant financial instability to balance the college's budget and ensure satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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**

5 June 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Hameldon Community College, Lancashire, BB12 6NU

As you may know, I have been visiting the college with a small team of inspectors each term since it was placed in special measures over two years ago, and I have written regular reports on its progress. This week, three colleagues and I carried out the college's reinspection. We are happy to report that it no longer requires special measures because Hameldon is providing you with a satisfactory and improving education. Some aspects are now good, for example in the care, guidance and support the college provides for each of you, and this is particularly important when some students need extra help, either with work, behaviour or personal issues. Significant improvement has been made in teaching and leadership which are now satisfactory with good features and governance is good. You are now making satisfactory progress in your work.

Some of you who spoke to inspectors told us about the positive changes and better lessons. You also agreed that although behaviour is much better than it used to be, a small number of students still disturb some of your lessons. Attendance and punctuality have improved slowly but could be much better, and some students are content to do just the minimum amount of work rather than pushing themselves higher. These are the reasons why your personal development is satisfactory rather than good, despite all the college's efforts to promote your independence, confidence and good work habits. Well done to those of you who do make the most of the opportunities the college provides and are achieving better results!

We have asked the college to continue to raise the standards of your work so that more students reach the highest levels that they are capable of. This will come about by ensuring that teaching is good or better in all lessons and that each of you attends regularly and punctually and puts as much effort as possible into those lessons!

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Marguerite McCloy

Her Majesty's Inspector