

Bodmin College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112049
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	337828
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1553
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Roberts
Headteacher	Robert Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
School address	Lostwithiel Road Bodmin PL31 1DD
Telephone number	01208 72114
Fax number	01208 78680
Email address	head@bodmincollege.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	11–18
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Inspection number	337828

**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision****Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 44 lessons and parts of lessons and observed 44 teachers. Year 11 and sixth form students were involved in examinations during the inspection and therefore it was not possible to observe lessons involving these students. However, inspectors had extensive discussions with individuals and groups of students. Meetings took place with the Vice-Chair of Governors, staff, students and parents and carers. The inspection team observed the college's work and looked at documentation which included the college development plan, assessment information, safeguarding documentation, curricular planning and samples of students' work in lessons. Inspectors analysed the results of 160 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and took account of the views expressed in student questionnaires.

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

- students' progress in 2009/2010 with particular reference to mathematics
- consistency in the quality of learning across all lessons and for all groups of students
- sixth form students and the quality of their independent learning.

Information about the school

Bodmin College is a larger-than-average secondary college. Numbers of students attending the sixth form are increasing. The very large majority of students are White British. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An increasing number of students are at the early stages of learning English, mainly Portuguese and Polish. A lower-than-average number of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the main school. However, the college has an additional resourced separate specialist unit the Greenfield Centre ? on site for students with severe or moderate learning difficulties. Students attending this unit come from a wide geographical area and so the number of students who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than the national average. Governors manage a nursery provision on site which is closing at the end of the summer term 2010. The college leases eight units at an industrial centre 400 yards away for its construction, hairdressing and beauty therapy, digital media and photography and childcare vocational courses. It also has an extensive sporting agenda. The college has been a specialist science college since 2003 and has since gained High Performing Specialist School status during 2008/2009 and taken on a second specialism for leadership. Among many other awards, the college has achieved the Gold International Schools Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Bodmin is an outstanding college. Students enter the college with below average attainment and leave with broadly average attainment. The college's assessment and tracking systems show that students of all abilities and groupings, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities from the Greenfield Centre as well as the main college, are making good progress. The curriculum is outstanding and fully meets the needs of all students, who throughout the college receive excellent care, support and guidance. The college's capacity for sustained improved is excellent and is based on very accurate self-evaluation and on imaginative, innovative leadership and management through:

- senior managers and teachers responding flexibly to the needs of the students and the wider community as, for example, by setting up very effective vocational courses off site including construction, hairdressing and digital courses
- senior managers encouraging the skills needed to drive improvement in the classroom or workshop through rigorous staff development programmes illustrated, for example,
- by the outstanding teaching in science where the very strong focus on active learning enabled many students at the college to achieve the highest grades nationally in applied double award science in 2009
- by the significantly improved quality of teaching in English and mathematics since the last inspection
- teachers and students using new technology and extending external partnerships both in and out of college to spread confidence in the wider community about learning opportunities at Bodmin College
- senior managers and teachers being open to new ideas from students and most especially contributing to an outstanding creative curriculum in art, music, drama and dance
- senior managers making full use of the college's dual specialist science and leadership status by using resources effectively and consistently improving the college's value for money.

Governance is good and the governing body and parents and carers enthusiastically support the direction in which the college is moving. A parent expressed a typical view in the comment 'My daughter loves this school'. Teaching is good although senior staff recognise that there is some inconsistency between teachers and between subjects in the use of assessment data to inform students of their progress towards their targets. Students feel very safe and are committed to a good healthy lifestyle. Attendance is above average and behaviour is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

is excellent and promoted by well-planned personal and social education courses throughout the college. The college undertakes its wider responsibilities as a specialist science college very well particularly in support of local primary schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- 2Improve the consistency of feedback to students on their performance in relation to targets so that all feedback is of at least good quality.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students enjoy their learning and so make good progress. Attainment is improving strongly and achievement is good. Current tracking and assessment data show that students are making good progress. In 2009/2010 over 70% of the students are on course to gain five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C and over 80% of students are likely to achieve two A* to C grades in science. The quality of learning in mathematics has improved significantly in 2009/2010 and students now make good progress. No groups of students underachieve. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in main school and in the Greenfield Centre because of the effective encouragement and support they receive from teachers and learning support staff. The quality of students' learning was exemplified in an outstanding Year 7 religious education lesson focused on 'Jesus in his environment'. Exemplary preparation by the teacher led to a marvellously entertaining and engaging lesson. Very effective learning in a very positive atmosphere included excellent use of the interactive whiteboard by students and was further linked to dramatic scenes played out by students.

The high levels of inclusion are central to the college's ethos and reflected at every level. Students talk openly of the complete absence of threat and harassment. They are confident they will be listened to. Behaviour is good; fixed-term exclusions are quite high but this is part of a determined approach to improving behaviour. Students know the importance of good healthy lifestyles. An extensive range of extra-curricular activities is well received by students although a number are still to take action in response to alcohol and smoking. Large numbers of leadership courses for students are offered through peer mentors, paired readers, an extensive Duke of Edinburgh scheme, sports academy leaders and Arts Awards students. Students on Duke of Edinburgh journeys to the Brecon Beacons and elsewhere are taken out of their 'comfort zones' and learn techniques of how to look after themselves safely. Opportunities for team-working, leadership and employment experiences in the local and wider communities through Enterprise Days ensure that students are very well prepared for the world of work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that teaching is good. Bodmin College has a rich media environment with cutting edge technology which makes a marked contribution to the quality of learning. Best practice was exemplified in an outstanding Year 9 chemistry lesson on 'covalent bonding', where students' understanding and rapid pace of learning were very effectively underpinned by a well-planned series of active learning activities. Volunteers eagerly accepted challenges from the teacher to lead the class through their work on the interactive whiteboard. A strong use of humour and paired peer support on assessment further enhanced the quality of learning. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups of students effectively and help them to make good progress. Assessment systems provide an accurate understanding of the performance and participation of all groups of students and help leaders and managers to fine tune individual support for learners. However, in some lessons teachers do not use assessment information sharply enough to accelerate learning. In the best practice, teachers are adept at using probing questions to check students' understanding and help them to 'think wider'. This brings out the very best in the students so that they make rapid progress. Students are encouraged to develop skills in evaluating their own work and that of others, and to hone their independent learning and collaborative working skills. In an excellent Year 7 mathematics lesson, students evaluated their own progress at regular intervals and the teacher matched their progress very carefully against individual target levels. As a result, by the plenary students were very clear about the next stage of their work.

The college works on a two-year Key Stage 3 course in Years 7 and 8 and students

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

begin their Key Stage 4 courses in Year 9. There is a very strong curriculum focus on employability skills and this is raising expectations and achievement across all groups of students. Most of last year's Year 11 students remained in education; a clear indication that the school ensures that they continue to see the value of education. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit greatly from flexible learning programmes. Extra-curricular clubs and learning groups are well supported. There is a very well-led sports academy based in the school and the College Jazz Band is off to the USA to play this summer. Vulnerable students receive very effective support. Transition arrangements across all phases are excellent. Parental feedback on option choice from Years 8 to 9 led to a change in the format and illustrates well that the school takes note of their feedback.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The college has handled a series of changes in senior management very well. As a specialist leadership school, senior staff on occasions have been called away to support other secondary schools. Key middle managers in science, English, mathematics, the creative arts and in vocational subjects have been appointed and are making a huge impact on teaching and learning throughout the college. The overall result has been to demonstrate that the college has excellent capacity for sustaining the significant improvements it has made over the past seven years. Responses from students, staff and parents and carers show that they view teachers and adults ? at all levels of management ? as a powerful, motivating force throughout the college. The impact of their leadership can be seen in the high quality education provided by the college, the good progress made by students and in the creation of a college ethos that is friendly, welcoming and mutually supportive. Close attention is paid to ensuring that good safeguarding procedures are in place and that statutory duties are reviewed regularly and meet requirements. Professional support and in-service training days through the 'Learning Forum' are regularly used to raise awareness of child protection and of teaching and curriculum issues. Relationships throughout the college are excellent. Governance is thoughtful but challenging. Governors examine the impact of policies on the college's work and hold the college accountable. For example, a very low take-up for modern foreign languages in Years 9 and 12 was raised as an area of concern at the beginning of the current academic year. The college has responded by using its

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

specialist science strength as a motivational tool to develop students' interest in French and Spanish. From September 2010 there are now many more students taking a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4 and a sixth form A-level group in Year 12. The promotion of community cohesion is good and has some outstanding features in terms of the local community. The college's contacts internationally in Angola and Malawi have led to the college achieving the Gold International Award. Work on raising awareness of the diversity within the United Kingdom is developing well and the college is making good progress in this area. The effective promotion of equal opportunities leads to harmony across all ethnic groups and has improved the performance of students needing additional support.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

Sixth form provision is good and has shown significant improvement since the last inspection. All groups of students make good progress and attainment by the end of Year 13 is broadly average, with students' starting points, in the past, being below average. Improvements have been achieved through consistently good teaching and because of the excellent leadership and management of the head of sixth form and sixth form tutors. No teaching was observed because students had begun their examinations but students spoke very highly about their experience in the sixth form. Highly-focused dialogue between teachers and students drives learning forward so that the students often achieve better-than-expected results. Students confirmed that teachers focus strongly on enabling them to learn independently to consolidate their understanding. An extremely broad academic and vocational curriculum is personalised to such an extent

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

that it meets the needs of vulnerable students as well as Oxbridge candidates. Students have excellent access to new technology. Sixth formers make an effective contribution to the college and wider communities. Many take on roles as curriculum leaders in supporting younger students, for example as science or language leaders. Key life-skills, such as independence, reliability and time management, are reflected for students in the models set by teachers. In discussion, students emphasised the very high quality of the care, support and guidance that they receive. Every opportunity is taken to involve students in the life of the college and local community.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	1

Views of parents and carers

In their response to the inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers were positive about the college and its impact on their children's well-being. They also believe that the college is well led and managed. The quality of pastoral care, the curriculum and opportunities for extra-curricular activities were highly praised. A small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about behaviour and whether the college took account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found behaviour generally to be good and that there were clear procedures for parents and carers to approach the college with their concerns and suggestions.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bodmin College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the college. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the college. The inspection team received 160 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1553 pupils registered at the college.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	45	76	48	7	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	70	44	84	53	3	2	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	46	76	48	6	4	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	42	77	48	6	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	74	46	75	47	4	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	33	79	49	22	14	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	34	84	53	16	10	5	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	63	39	73	46	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	36	87	54	9	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	41	72	45	8	5	6	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	31	83	52	9	6	6	4
The school is led and managed effectively	79	50	68	43	0	0	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	49	72	45	7	4	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Bodmin College, Bodmin PL31 1DD

We are writing to let you know how much we enjoyed our visit to your college. You will be pleased to learn that we judge Bodmin College to be an outstanding college. We were very impressed with so much of what we saw and heard over the two days.

You told us personally and through your questionnaire responses that you enjoy college and that relationships between students and adults are excellent.

All groups of students make good progress and achieve well.

We were particularly impressed by the quality of your work in the arts, science and vocational courses.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are excellent. Sixth formers achieve well while at the same time contributing effectively as leaders within the main college.

Teaching is good; a significant number of lessons observed were outstanding.

Your choices within the excellent curriculum are flexible, meet your personal needs and added to by additional experiences such as the Jazz band trip to the USA, the sports academy and a very wide choice of extra-curricular activities.

The outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the college allow you to flourish as learners and develop high levels of independence. These are the main findings of our inspection.

The inspection team agrees with the college that it has the means to maintain and consolidate the improvements being made. We have advised the college that we would like teaching to become more consistent so that you all get high quality feedback on your progress and guidance on how to improve.

Once again, thank you for the welcome and we wish you the very best of luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.