

Clyst Vale Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113501
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338187
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1012
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Straw
Headteacher	Dr K Bawn
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2001
School address	Station Road Broadclyst Exeter EX5 3AJ
Telephone number	01392 461407
Fax number	01392 460594
Email address	admin@clyst-vale.devon.sch.uk

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

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 37 lessons and observed 37 teachers, spending 60% of their time looking at learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students, and were available to meet parents and carers on request. Inspectors observed the college's work, and looked at key documents, such as the improvement plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body, and 260 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- the progress that students are currently making, particularly boys in their writing
- how successfully the college has addressed inconsistencies in the quality of teaching
- how well the curriculum contributes to developing students' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and to their wider personal development
- how successfully leaders at all levels target their actions at improving students' progress.

Information about the school

Clyst Vale is a comprehensive school of average size and serves a mainly White British community living in several rural villages. About one third of students choose to come to the college from the nearby city of Exeter. The college is just completing some significant building development, following a local authority decision to postpone for some years the proposed relocation to a new settlement nearby. It has had specialist status for science, mathematics and computing since 2005. The sixth form provision is broadened by collaboration with three other schools.

The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is above average. A below average proportion is eligible for free school meals. The college provides a breakfast service for students as well as opportunities for study support at the end of the day and houses the local authority's hearing support unit in Exeter and east Devon.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Clyst Vale has improved significantly and is now a good college. The governors, the principal and his staff have created an outstandingly caring and supportive community where students behave and learn well and develop as individuals. Parents are strongly supportive of the college. One commented on the 'very good atmosphere' and another praised the 'very strong' pastoral system. These views are representative of most parents and carers and are fully supported by inspection evidence.

Students achieve well, making good progress, and their attainment is average and improving by the end of Year 11. More rigorous tracking of progress and an ambitious action plan addressed the dip in standards in 2008 very successfully. The college has been working effectively to improve the standard of boys' writing and has rightly decided that these efforts should continue. Students in the sixth form make good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive. Teaching in Years 7 to 11 has improved and is now good. Students work well in lessons and most of the teaching observed by inspectors was good with staff using their good subject knowledge effectively. Despite the improvement, there remains some inconsistency in the quality of teaching and inspectors observed some that was satisfactory. In these lessons, the pace of learning was slower and activities did not always challenge the students appropriately. Students' work is checked regularly and marking often gives advice on how to do better, especially in Years 10 and 11. This is inconsistent, however, particularly in Years 7 to 9, and as a result, younger students sometimes are unclear on what to do to raise the standard of their work.

The curriculum supports the development of students' basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology well and the college's specialist subjects have made a good contribution to broadening provision. The curriculum is enriched through special events, for example enterprise days and the new 'deep learning' days, which promote students' wider personal development well. The college's commitment to including all students is very strong and the support provided for the most vulnerable students is outstanding.

The college benefits from the clear-sighted and committed leadership of the principal and his strong senior team, supported by governors who carry out their role well. External programmes, for example 'Gaining Ground', have been used well to support improvement priorities which are clear, accurate and underpinned by rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the college's work. Leadership of subjects and year groups is mostly strong but there are some inconsistencies in its quality that the college has identified and begun to address. There is real ambition to build on students' improved progress and the recent building work has enhanced the accommodation

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significantly. Challenging targets are set and the college's recent record in achieving these is good. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best, by ensuring that teaching is consistently well matched to students' differing needs and that students in Years 7 to 9 receive more guidance on how to do better.
- Ensure that all pastoral and subject leaders match the high standards of the best in improving students' progress further by:
 - monitoring teaching and learning and analysing assessment information carefully to identify areas for improvement
 - devising and implementing suitable action plans
 - learning from colleagues' good practice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students concentrate well in their lessons. In one Year 11 lesson observed, the students' capacity to listen carefully to a detailed account of events in the life of Guru Hargobind and recount the key events afterwards was impressive. Students work well both independently and in cooperation with others and their learning was often observed by inspectors to be enhanced by discussion with a partner. Students enjoy their learning, respect each other's ideas and listen carefully to their classmates.

The proportion of students securing five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics fell in 2008 and was below average. Progress also dipped and was unsatisfactory overall, particularly in English. Senior leaders acknowledge that planning for an expected imminent move to a new site played a key role in deflecting attention from the close monitoring of progress. However, the college responded with great vigour and impressive results were achieved. In 2009, standards rose significantly to slightly above average. Progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11 was good. Such was the improvement in achievement that the local authority decided two terms earlier than planned that the college no longer required the additional support it had provided. The college's assessment data and inspection evidence indicate that attainment in 2010 is on track to rise further and that students are achieving well. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of the high level of support and care they receive. Boys' writing is improving as a result of carefully planned additional support.

Students feel safe and very well cared for. They have a firm grasp of the importance of eating healthy food and of taking plenty of exercise. They make a good contribution to the college community and put forward their ideas through year councils and the college council. Attendance is above average and rising; the college has exceeded its target.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Relationships in the classrooms between students and between students and adults are good. Teachers usually engage their students well within this positive atmosphere. Good teaching observed was characterised by well-planned lessons, with engaging activities that caught students' interest well. The pace of learning was brisk and work was well matched to students' needs. Teachers used questioning well to press students to think for themselves and to check their understanding. Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers sometimes gave too much time to activities. Work was not as well matched to students' needs and was sometimes too difficult for some or not challenging enough for others. Students in Years 10 and 11 are pleased with the guidance they receive from their teachers on how to raise their standards. This is less consistent in Years 7 to 9 where students often have a view of how well they are doing but not always what aspects of their work they need to improve and how to do it.

Carefully considered changes have been made to the curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9 in response to national changes, for example the introduction of 'Enterprise' lessons in Year 9. The college is shortly to evaluate the impact of this development but early indications are positive. The curriculum is sensitively adapted to meet the needs of particular groups, for example additional support for some boys in improving their writing in Year 8 and the provision of more vocational pathways for some in Years 10 and 11. The curriculum makes an important contribution to students keeping healthy,

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

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staying safe and preparing for the future through the personal and social development programme. It is enhanced well by additional courses provided by the specialist subject departments. A new course in information and communication technology for Years 10 and 11 is having a positive impact on students' skills. The excellent arrangements made to support students joining the college in Year 7 and the good careers provision are valued by parents and carers. Rigorous and thorough approaches are used to promote good attendance.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governors and senior staff have effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the college's work and are ambitious for further improvement. Most middle leaders, for example those for the subjects of English, mathematics and science, provide good leadership for their subject or year group. They check on students' progress and on the quality of teaching and learning well. Strengths and priorities for improvement are identified clearly and an appropriate action plan results. However, the quality of middle leadership is not consistent across the college and sometimes these activities are not carried out to a high standard. This has a negative impact on students' progress in some subjects. The college has already identified this and has had some success, for example through new staffing in information and communication technology, but acknowledges that more remains to be done. Governors have a good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of the college and are well informed by the principal. Their monitoring committee, established a year ago, keeps a close check on progress with priorities.

The college ensures that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and is working with some success to improve boys' writing. This shows its effectiveness in promoting equal opportunities for all students to achieve as well as they can. It also ensures that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times. The college makes a good contribution to community cohesion. There is a strong sense of community in the college and very good links with schools in the local learning community where the specialist subjects play an important role. The college has links with schools in Iraq, supports pupils in Kenya and provides opportunities for students to understand other cultures through the curriculum. These include a visit to a Gurdwara in Southall for GCSE students in 'Beliefs and Values' but the college recognises

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that its contribution to promoting students' understanding of cultural diversity in other parts of Britain is underdeveloped. The school has an outstanding range of partnerships with external organisations to extend the opportunities for students in their work and in their personal development.

The college's arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements well. Checks are made on all adults who work within the college and the outcomes of these are recorded carefully.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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

Students make good progress from their starting points at the beginning of Year 12 and achieve results in line with national averages. They have very positive attitudes, taking responsibility for their own learning and working well with others. One student described the sixth form as 'a really nice place to be', while another spoke of 'a comfortable, supportive environment.' Such views help to explain the impressively high proportion of students completing their courses, particularly in Year 13 where 100% did so in 2008/09, and the increasing popularity of the sixth form with students from other schools. The good range of subjects available is enhanced by the college's collaboration with three other sixth forms in east Devon.

Teaching is good and staff willingly offer additional support if needed. Data are collected carefully to check students' progress. Students are treated as individuals and they value the regular meetings with their tutor where they can raise any concerns and review how well they are doing. They make a good contribution to the wider college community, for

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example through paired reading with younger students. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for the sixth form, including opportunities to develop financial skills, improve fitness and enhance their cooking. Students find the Year 12 residential visit to Bude particularly valuable in helping them settle into the sixth form and develop new skills. Good guidance is available to help students make decisions about their future in the world of work or in higher education.

Enthusiastic and vigorous leadership of the sixth form has secured some important improvements in provision, for example in the promotion of independent learning and in assessment procedures. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are carefully monitored, resulting in clear and appropriate priorities for further improvement.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

Analysis of the questionnaires returned by parents and carers showed that most respondents are happy with children's experience at this college, believe that their child enjoys it and that the college is led and managed well. Almost all believe that the college keeps children safe and that their child is well prepared for the future. Inspection evidence indicates that these positive views are justified. A very small minority of parents and carers express concerns about behaviour. These are not supported by the evidence gathered by inspectors which showed behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clyst Vale Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 260 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1012 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	105	40	140	54	12	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	105	40	150	58	3	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	96	37	143	55	17	7	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	26	168	65	16	6	4	2
The teaching is good at this school	68	26	174	67	11	4	4	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	20	169	65	33	13	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	17	192	74	18	7	5	2
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)	75	29	153	59	14	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	70	27	169	65	17	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	66	25	157	60	27	10	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	22	171	66	14	5	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	80	31	163	63	9	3	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	44	129	50	10	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



28 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Clyst Vale Community College, Broadclyst, Exeter, EX5 3AJ

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us.

You go to a good college which has improved significantly and most of you are rightly proud of it. I hope that you will read the whole report but here is a brief summary of our key findings.

- You are making good progress in your work, supported by a good curriculum which equips you well for later life.
- The teaching in the college is good and you get on well with the staff.
- The sixth form provision is good and students benefit from good assessment and tutorial systems.
- Your behaviour is good and most of you enjoy your time in the college.
- The college cares for you exceptionally well and you feel safe.
- The governors, the principal and the other staff are determined that the college should continue to improve.

We have asked the college to improve two aspects.

- Teaching is good but sometimes does not provide work that is at the right level of difficulty and we have asked the college to ensure that all the teaching in the college is as good as the best. We have also asked that students in Years 7 to 9 receive more guidance on how to do better in their work.
- Most heads of department and year heads are doing a good job in helping to improve the progress you make but this is not consistent across the college and we have asked the principal to ensure that all middle leaders are as good as the best.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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