

Chulmleigh Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113509
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	338190
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Karl Sampson 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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	573
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Johnny Forshall
Headteacher	Mr Michael Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	4 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors visited 34 lessons, observed 26 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, policy documents and students' work. They also scrutinised 173 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and a sample of students

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

- how well all groups of students are achieving, particularly in mathematics
- how effectively provision meets the needs of all groups of students, including the more vulnerable
- the contribution of business and enterprise status to school improvement
- the effectiveness and impact of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior and middle leaders on student outcomes.

Information about the school

Chulmleigh Community College is a smaller than average rural school. It serves a large, dispersed and somewhat isolated catchment area covering over 200 square miles. The school has recently federated with its neighbouring primary school under a single governing body. Most students are of White British heritage and the vast majority speak English as their first language. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is half the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that found nationally. These include students who have speech, language and communication difficulties or who have social, emotional and behavioural issues. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is slightly below the national average. The school has held business and enterprise specialist status since 2003.

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

Chulmleigh Community College is a good and improving school. In this caring and supportive environment students feel safe, enjoy their learning and achieve well. There is a rising trend in students' attainment and all students make good progress in their learning regardless of their background, starting points or special educational needs. The school has made major strides forward in the three years since its last inspection. Making these improvements has not been easy. The headteacher, governors and senior colleagues have had to deal with some tough issues, such as restructuring of responsibilities and challenges to do with recruitment of staff, as well as the problem of poor-quality accommodation. However, through a relentless drive for improvement and with the support of the community they have tackled these issues with resolute determination and considerable success. Much has been achieved and everything is securely in place to support the school's further improvement. In particular:

- it is well led by a headteacher who has a clear vision for the school's future
- leadership across the school has been strengthened: senior leaders form a strong team and the quality of middle leadership is now much more consistent
- leaders have a detailed, accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development
- the learning environment is vastly improved so it no longer acts as a barrier to learning, and it is used expertly to secure good outcomes for all students.

The quality of teaching and assessment has improved appreciably. Much teaching is now good and some excellent. At its best the teaching enthuses and engages the students through a creative and imaginative approach, challenging learning activities and opportunities for students to learn independently of the teacher. The highest quality teaching is underpinned by precise subject-specific marking and assessment which enables students to understand exactly what they need to do to improve. However, these skills are not yet shared by all teachers. The small minority of teaching that is less strong slows progress and leads to variation in achievement between subjects.

Students are polite, positive and friendly, and they behave well. The excellent quality of care, guidance and support provided for students has a positive effect on their personal development, which in some aspects is outstanding. However, students' understanding of the cultural diversity of contemporary Britain is less well developed. Students make an extensive contribution to the life of the school and the wider community thanks to the quality of the curriculum, the outstanding range of partnerships and the excellent opportunities arising from the school's specialist status. There is a shared sense of pride among those who work and learn here and this is echoed in the views of parents and by the local community. One parent summarised the views of many as follows: 'My

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daughter is very happy in this strong community school. She is encouraged to work hard to achieve good results and is challenged to do her best. Teachers know her well and take time to develop her potential.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon the best practice in the school so that all teaching is good or better by January 2011 and the proportion of outstanding lessons is increased to at least 40% by January 2012. It should improve its teaching by:
 - planning learning experiences which provide high levels of challenge for all students in all lessons
 - ensuring students are given more opportunity to work independently, creatively and collaboratively and take greater responsibility for their learning and progress
 - ensuring consistency in the use of day-to-day assessment so that all students understand the subject-specific actions that they must take to improve their work.
- Ensure students develop their understanding of other cultures within the United Kingdom, by extending current provision in this area and monitoring its effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1

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

The school's care and support for students are important strengths. The development of the house system, with students from different year groups mixed together in the same tutor group, has made a significant contribution to improvement in these areas.

Excellent links with a range of outside agencies complement a coherent, integrated approach to ensure that help is tailored to individual need. Consequently, all students, including those who are more vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive comprehensive and well-targeted support, guidance and care.

The curriculum is developing well and is now more flexible for all students. Although not yet fully embedded, there are a number of emerging strengths in the school's own programme to support the development of learning skills across the federation. Its emphasis is on the creation of opportunities for students to recognise and hone personal, learning and thinking skills and support their future development as learners.

There is a good balance between vocational and academic courses. At Key Stage 4 the school's partnership work with other local providers has improved the richness of vocational and applied opportunities available. This has enabled students to select a combination of courses that meet their needs much more closely.

The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities on offer is extremely impressive. These opportunities are well attended by all groups of students and give good support to aspects of their personal development.

The school accurately evaluates the quality of teaching as good. The large majority of lessons observed were good or better and no inadequate lessons were seen during the inspection. At its best, teaching is inspiring. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, and their relationships with their classes are superb.

Less effective lessons typically have the following characteristics:

a tendency for teachers to over-direct proceedings, with the result that students spend too much time listening passively

learning activities that lack variety and interest and do not match the needs of all students so that not everyone is fully challenged

too few opportunities for students to develop their ideas independently or collaboratively.

In lessons where these features were apparent, progress was at best satisfactory.

Marking and assessment have improved since the last inspection. They are at their best in English, science and information and communication technology where teachers provide precise subject-specific guidance which clearly identifies what students need to

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do to improve their work. In some other cases, guidance is of limited value and simply confirms that students have completed work, corrects what they have written, or provides general comments.

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 headteacher, ably supported by a strong leadership team, has set a very clear vision for the school and has successfully driven through a wide range of improvements. He has worked diligently to promote an ethos of teamwork and continuous improvement among a staffing body that has changed substantially since the previous inspection.

Clear plans to embed the work of the newly formed federation have a strong focus on improving achievement through raising the quality of teaching and learning across both schools. Staff understand and subscribe to this vision and ambition and morale is high.

Governors are frequent visitors, have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and hold leaders to account when they need to. They give effective support to the school's future development within the federation.

Effective procedures are in place to ensure students' safety and all current safeguarding requirements are met. Training of all staff, in particular child protection, is of good quality.

Much work has been done to develop the quality and consistency of middle leaders in securing good outcomes for all students. Heads of House work closely with heads of department to monitor the pastoral and academic achievement of each student. As a result, the way that they monitor and evaluate the school's work, set targets and track the progress made by all students is more thorough: it is now extensive and rigorous.

The school promotes equality of opportunity strongly through effective policies and procedures that ensure that outcomes and experiences for all students are positive.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Its strengths are in the well-established international links and its engagement with the local community through its specialist status. The school is developing its strategy to improve students' engagement with other communities across Britain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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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

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, a very large majority showed that they were highly satisfied with the quality of education and care the school provides. Those who wrote positive comments referred to the school as 'supportive' and 'well-led' and praised the extra-curricular activities. This is reflected in the extremely positive responses to questions 1, 2, 3, 12 and 13. A few parents raised concerns about the effectiveness with which the school communicates information, or takes account of their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors recognise that any lapse in communication is a concern for those involved but consider that the school works extremely hard to communicate with parents and act upon their views. The school recognises that it needs to persist in finding effective ways of communicating with some families, particularly those who are unable to come into school, or do not have access to the internet

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chulmleigh 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 173 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 573 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	29	103	60	15	9	3	2
The school keeps my child safe	51	29	113	65	6	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	24	108	62	16	9	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	25	111	64	13	8	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	43	25	110	64	10	6	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	14	115	66	25	14	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	20	106	61	21	12	2	1
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)	38	22	109	63	12	7	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	25	100	58	18	10	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	24	94	54	20	12	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	17	96	55	28	16	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	47	27	102	59	11	6	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	34	99	57	11	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



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5 February 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Chulmleigh Community College, Chulmleigh, EX18 7AA

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. I am writing to tell you about our findings. We judged the school to be good. It has worked really hard since the last inspection to improve your achievement. Your headteacher leads the school well, and is ably supported by other staff and the governors. They are all determined that you should have the opportunity to succeed and their work enables you to achieve good outcomes. You told us how much you appreciated the work of your teachers and the improvements that had been made to the learning environment.

You enjoy coming to school, are extremely well cared for, have a good range of curricular opportunities and are well taught. You particularly appreciate the positive benefits that business and enterprise status has brought as well as the impressive range of opportunities and extra-curricular activities which enable you to live a very healthy lifestyle. You told us you feel safe, and we think your behaviour in and around the school is good. You are polite, friendly and make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

We have asked your headteacher to improve the school in a number of ways. He was already aware of their importance and we were able to agree them very easily.

- Work closely with the teachers to make lessons even better by:
- ensuring all teachers provide you with challenging learning activities which engage you more actively in learning
- allowing you to develop your ideas and take greater responsibility for your own learning
- ensuring that all teachers consistently give you better feedback on your work so that you always know how to improve in each subject. Please make sure you pay close attention to the advice they give.
- Increase and monitor carefully the number of opportunities for you to broaden your

understanding of other cultures within the country.
Very best wishes for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Karl Sampson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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