

# Dawlish Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113518
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338193
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Hodgkinson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	856
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Webb
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Elm Grove Road Dawlish EX7 0BY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 33 teachers and 34 lessons, and dropped in briefly on other lessons and activities. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, governors, students and representatives of the local authority who have been supporting the college's improvement. Inspectors looked at documentation, including students' books, the college development and action plans, minutes of the governing body, records of assessment and tracking of students' progress, plans and monitoring information for the support of vulnerable students, records of the college's arrangements for the safeguarding and protection of students, policies and procedures for promoting equality and countering discrimination. In addition, inspectors considered 79 parents' and carers' questionnaire responses, and those from staff and students.

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

- how successful the college has been in tackling falling attainment and progress, particularly in English and mathematics
- the quality of teaching, and whether it is ensuring that learning and progress are improving securely and quickly
- the effectiveness of the college in ensuring good progress for lower-attaining students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the level of school action
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in securing rapid improvement in college performance.

## Information about the school

This is a specialist technology college of broadly average size serving the town of Dawlish and surrounding area on the south Devon coast. Most students are White British. There is a much higher proportion of boys than girls in most year groups. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities has grown quickly since the last inspection and is now broadly average. A high proportion have a statement of special educational needs, and this includes students with behavioural, emotional and social needs, visual impairment, physical disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders. A broadly average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. The college has a broad extended school programme through which it offers a range of services to students and their parents, and to the local community. Since the last inspection the college has gained Healthy School and Active Lifestyles awards, and International School status at intermediate level. It is also recognised as an Investor in Careers, and has become an accredited Teacher Learning Academy

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The college provides its students with a satisfactory standard of education. It offers a welcoming environment where staff and students get on well together, and where students feel safe and well cared for. Students are exceptionally keen to take up the many opportunities to make their voices heard and influence the way the college is run. They willingly get involved in projects to improve their community and environment. Their above-average and significantly improving attendance is testament to their enjoyment of and involvement in the life of the college.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is now broadly average, and standards in English, which have been low for many years, have risen to average levels across Key Stages 3 and 4. Across all subjects, though, students' skills in writing at length remain a relative weakness.

Students make satisfactory progress overall. Higher-attainers generally achieve or exceed expectations by the end of Year 11. However, for too long lower-attaining students, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities at the level of 'school action', have underachieved. Systems for monitoring, intervening and supporting such students are now improving and are increasingly well coordinated through the Flexible Learning Centre. The college recognises that the satisfactory curriculum, with strengths in its academic provision for its specialist subjects, is not yet sufficiently tailored to meet fully the needs of its lower-attainers. It will be helped in this regard by the imminent opening of a large new skills centre adjacent to the school site, with the capacity to deliver a wide range of vocational programmes.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons typically feature a good variety of activities and a range of resources to keep students interested. As a result, students generally behave well in lessons. However, in a minority of lessons work is not adapted well enough to meet the needs of the full range of abilities of students, and the pace of learning is too slow. Care, guidance and support for students remain key strengths of the college, and are at the core of its inclusive ethos. Low and falling rates of exclusion and persistent absence, and the high proportion of students who stay on in education, training or employment when they leave, are all key indicators of the strong success of the college's pastoral care and personal and social education programmes.

The principal and senior team are ambitious for the college and have worked relentlessly over the last year, drawing on the measured and effective support of the local authority, to turn around the marked decline in GCSE standards in 2009. A strong programme is now in place to support and improve the quality of teaching. These measures have successfully moved standards from their low level a year ago, but it is too early for them

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to demonstrate a strong record of sustained improvement in students' achievement. While middle leaders have been empowered to take a more active role in monitoring and developing the work in their subjects, the full involvement of all subjects in self-evaluation and improvement planning has yet to be fully established. Capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory overall.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve attainment and progress for all students in English by strengthening provision for literacy, and especially extended writing, across all subjects.
- Improve the attainment and progress of lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs at the level of school action by:
  - monitoring the progress of students with special educational needs at school action level carefully against that of other groups
  - tailoring the curriculum more precisely to the needs of lower-attaining students.
- Ensure that work in lessons is consistently adapted well enough to offer effective support and challenge to students of all abilities.
- Strengthen the quality of self-evaluation across all areas of the college to ensure that college improvement strategies are being implemented with consistent effect.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Students join the college with broadly average attainment, although there are relatively fewer higher-attainers than found in schools nationally. Higher-attainers generally reach the GCSE standards expected of them, while lower-attainers have for some years underachieved. Attainment in most respects has been broadly average over time, although there was a sharp dip in the GCSE results in 2009. Attainment has recovered from that low point, including in English where results had been too low overall for some time. The foundations for such improvement have been laid by improving standards and progress in English across Key Stage 3 since the last inspection. Currently in English lessons across both key stages, students are mostly learning well and showing a very clear understanding of how well they are doing and where they need to improve. However, writing at length remains a relative weakness across all subjects. Variations in students' performance by subject are narrowing as college procedures to track and improve performance become sharper. This includes the specialist subjects, where performance in science has been consistently effective but performance in design and technology and mathematics more variable. Students across all aspects of design and technology now enjoy their practical activities, work with accuracy in using a range of technology to make their products, and underpin their work with increasingly creative and lively design portfolios.

Students behave courteously around the college site and constructively in lessons. They

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are enthusiastic in exploring cultures different from their own, for example when Year 8 students visited Bristol to work on a joint project with a multicultural inner-city school. They make an outstanding contribution to the work of the college by expressing their opinions and leading change through the many forums which exist to seek their views. A high proportion are involved in college sport and other activities which promote healthy lifestyles, and the college's monitoring of students' food choices in the dining room at lunchtime shows increasing take-up of healthy options. Satisfactory achievement in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) means that students are satisfactorily prepared for later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teachers' secure subject knowledge enables lessons to be planned around interesting and engaging themes and activities. Resources, including ICT, are well used to support learning. In many lessons resources are adapted to motivate and challenge students of all abilities. For example, in textiles technology higher-attainers in Year 8 were using computer-aided design and manufacture in embroidering designs onto hats, while others

<sup>1</sup> 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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produced effective iron-on transfers. However, in a significant minority of lessons, all students undertake the same tasks regardless of their ability or prior understanding. Work is then not challenging enough for some, or too challenging for others. Pace was excellent in the drama and Spanish lessons observed, where students led their own way through well-planned activities, drawing on the teacher's advice when necessary. However, where teachers talk to the whole class for too long, the pace of learning slows. Students are generally well aware of their target grades and the objectives of key pieces of work, and in many subjects the use of peer and self-assessment is helping students to recognise how to improve. The quality of marking in students' books is strong for some classes but varies in the quality of its advice and helpfulness. Homework is not set consistently enough to support learning.

The curriculum focuses strongly on a 'core' provision around the specialist subjects of science, design and technology and mathematics, together with English, and the proportions taking these subjects are high. The opening of the new skills centre on site will give a further boost to the college's specialist profile and its potential to act as a specialist hub for the area. It also has the capacity to overcome current gaps in provision for students more suited to applied and vocational courses. A strong thread of personal, social and health education, together with a beliefs and values programme, runs through the curriculum and contributes successfully to students' personal development. A good range of extra-curricular provision encourages students' participation in healthy activities and community projects.

Structures to provide care and support for students' welfare, safety and progress, centred on the Flexible Learning Centre and Student Office, are well developed and effective. The college works very successfully to keep students in education, for example by reducing rates of persistent absence and exclusions, including permanent exclusion, to very low levels. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally get good support from teaching assistants in class, although individual education plans do not always give teachers clear enough guidance on how to adapt their teaching for individual students. The college works effectively with partner primary schools to ensure smooth transition when students arrive in Year 7. Careers advice is highly regarded and ensures that most students move successfully into further education, training or employment when they leave Year 11.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

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College improvement strategies this year have been sharply and successfully focused on tracking students' progress, on improving the quality of teaching and learning, and on lifting the progress of lower- and middle-attaining groups. The quality of performance data on students' progress has improved markedly since the last inspection, and is helping managers and staff identify more clearly strengths and weaknesses in performance. Senior leaders have worked closely with the local authority to develop an accurate understanding of college effectiveness. Across subjects, methods of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning through lesson observation and scrutiny of students' work are developing, but have yet to inform comprehensive self-evaluation and improvement planning in all areas. Governors are highly supportive of the college and are fully involved in the drive for improvement, although they have not challenged the college's performance sharply enough in the past.

The college leadership consults widely with its students and their parents in taking forward improvements. It works effectively with local partners in providing services and courses to parents and the local community. It contributes well to community cohesion, and engages in projects to ensure that students are familiar with different communities and cultures across Britain and the wider world. Procedures for safeguarding the well-being of staff and students are well developed. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. The college has a highly inclusive ethos, but wide differences in performance between different ability groups and subjects have been evident in the past. Through better tracking data, the college now has a clearer understanding of the extent of and reasons for these differences and is beginning to close these gaps successfully.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>



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## **Views of parents and carers**

There was a low response rate to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents and carers. The large majority of responses were favourable, particularly in the way the college keeps students healthy and safe. Favourable views were also expressed about the leadership and management of the college. Inspectors agree that the college promotes students' health and safety well, and that the leadership is now moving the college forward. A few responses expressed concerns about the variability of progress and quality of teaching across subjects and between classes, and that homework was not set consistently. Inspectors agree that such variations exist, and have drawn attention to these issues in this report. A few parents also raised concerns about poor behaviour, but inspectors judge that on the whole behaviour is good and makes a positive contribution to students' learning.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dawlish 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 856 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	23	51	65	10	13	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	36	46	58	4	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	34	41	52	7	9	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	21	41	52	14	18	7	9
The teaching is good at this school	12	15	51	65	7	9	7	9
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	9	52	66	11	14	6	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	15	61	77	3	4	1	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)	19	24	48	61	9	11	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	19	44	56	13	16	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	14	47	60	12	15	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	20	41	52	13	16	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	19	24	49	62	6	8	5	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	25	44	56	11	14	4	5

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 June 2010

Dear students

Inspection of Dawlish Community College, Dawlish, EX7 0BY

Many thanks for the welcome you gave to me and my colleagues when we visited the college for its recent inspection. We much enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. It is clear that you make an outstanding contribution to the college and wider community by contributing your views and bringing about improvements. Your enjoyment of the college and its activities is shown by your good attendance.

Relationships between staff and students are very positive and underpinned by the good behaviour of the very large majority of students.

The inspection judges that the college provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. You join the college with attainment that is broadly average and reach broadly average standards by Year 11, and make satisfactory progress overall. However, within that overall picture there are some differences in performance which have led to less effective progress in English, and less effective progress for lower-attaining students and some with special educational needs at the school action level. We have therefore asked the college to improve results in these areas.

We have judged teaching to be satisfactory overall. Teachers mainly plan interesting activities for you in lessons, and in the majority of cases offer you plenty of challenge. In some lessons, though, work is not always matched well to what you already know or understand, so that some find work too easy or others find it too difficult. We have, therefore, asked the college to ensure that lessons consistently offer the right challenge for all groups.

The principal and college leadership team have worked hard over the last year to improve achievement following a dip in the GCSE results in 2009. They have set in place many processes to help staff across the college identify more sharply strengths and weaknesses in performance. We have asked the college to ensure that these processes are widely shared across all areas of the college to secure further improvement.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hodgkinson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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