

# Babington Community Technology College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120294
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	339670
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Martin HMI

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>	750
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Barwell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Denise Newsome
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Strasbourg Drive Beaumont Leys Leicester
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 47 lessons and held meetings with students, the chair of the governing body, college leaders, college staff and the National Challenge Adviser. They observed the school's work and looked at school raising attainment and improvement plans, numerous policy documents, schemes of work, departmental planning and questionnaire returns from students, parents and staff.

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

- the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation of recent developments in assessment, planning and marking
- the effectiveness of middle leaders in tracking student progress, providing academic guidance and monitoring provision and outcomes
- the achievement of students, particularly of those gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C grades including English and mathematics and of lower attaining students receiving additional support.

## Information about the school

Babington is a specialist technology college and has been a National Challenge School since June 2008. More than half of the students are from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The ethnic profile has changed considerably since the last inspection to include a number of Somali, Czech and Slovak Roma students. Just under half of students do not have English as a first language; 43 different languages are spoken in the college.

The proportion of pupils eligible for a free school meal is high at 40%. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high and the number of students with statements is well above average. Mobility is high, although gradually reducing.

A new Principal was appointed to the college in April 2008.

**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

Babington is now a rapidly improving college, following a period where attainment has been too low and the progress made by students insufficiently strong. Specialist school targets have temporarily been superseded by National Challenge targets.

Although achievement has been improving securely and steadily since the last inspection, there has been a significant acceleration in the last eighteen months. Assessment information indicates that the college is on track to exceed its National Challenge targets by the end of the year. This improvement is based on secure and detailed self-evaluation and established changes to provision, leadership and management, increasing the college's capacity to improve in the future. Leadership and management is now good overall, leading to significant improvements in provision. There has been an unswerving focus on improving teaching and learning and the curriculum is now well matched to students' needs, interests and aspirations.

The college has other good features. These include:

- the day to day care of students and the extent to which they feel safe
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students in the context of a multicultural setting
- the promotion of community cohesion and engagement with parents and carers.

The college understands that there is more to be done to secure good achievement for all students. Teaching and learning, although much improved, remains inconsistent. Achievement in mathematics is still not as strong as in English. Attendance is improving but remains below expected levels.

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

- Close the gap in achievement between mathematics and English by continuing to focus sharply on improving teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics.
- Raise attendance closer to national figures by:
  - maintaining and further strengthening current successful strategies
  - making explicit for parents and students the relationship between attendance and attainment
- Improve the proportion of good and better teaching by further increasing consistency in the application of college policies and practices.
- 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.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Attainment, as measured against national standards, has remained low since the last inspection, although improving securely. This progress has been rapid in performance in terms of 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C. The progress made by students has been broadly satisfactory since the last inspection. However, current performance shows that students are now all achieving more strongly. This has been reflected in the success of early entry GCSE passes, notably in English but also in mathematics. Improved use of performance data and the careful individualised tracking of students show that the majority are now exceeding expected levels of progress. Recent changes to the curriculum have meant that lower attaining students are no longer following alternative provision that does not lead to a qualification. Every student in Year 11 is on track to achieve a pass in at least one subject. Hence preparation for future life is satisfactory. The tracking and improved progress is securely established throughout the school. The progress made by students is directly related to the quality of teaching seen on the inspection, with more than half of lessons being good or better. Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities also make similar progress to their peers. The progress of different groups is now carefully tracked, with intervention strategies to remedy underachievement. The achievement of boys, particularly the lower attaining ones, is a continuing priority for the school.

The personal development of students is generally good. They have a good awareness of the positive choices that they can take to adopt healthy lifestyles. The take up of healthy food at lunchtime is very high. A particularly strong feature of the school is that students recognise and celebrate diversity. Inspectors also saw many examples of students spontaneously supporting and helping each other in the classroom. Behaviour is generally good in class. Students feel that behaviour has improved a great deal although there is still some boisterousness around the site. Students very much appreciate and enjoy the opportunities that the school provides for them.

Attendance remains stubbornly below expected levels despite the best efforts of the college, although persistent absenteeism has been steadily reducing.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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>3</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>3</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>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

College leaders have employed strategies which have improved teaching and learning, and they know strengths and areas for improvement in great detail. Inspectors saw good or better teaching in more than half of lessons, although college monitoring evidence suggests this may be higher. There is certainly some outstanding practice and very little that is inadequate. Strengths include: the skilful management of students, and good relationships; good subject knowledge, the use of technology to stimulate interest; clear understanding of the levels students are working at; the good use of teaching assistants to support students with particular needs, including those with English as an additional language. There are still some inconsistencies in the pace of lessons and the challenge offered to students of different abilities. Marking is consistent and thorough, but does not always give clear advice to students on how to improve.

The curriculum is well modified to meet the individual needs of students. The curriculum has been broadened to include: a wide range of suitable vocational courses including the phased introduction of a range of diploma courses; early GCSE entry in mathematics and English, boosting confidence; an 'Opening Minds' course; literacy and numeracy opportunities within and beyond the normal day; enrichment days; a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Unit accreditation and early entry results are already showing the impact of these changes on achievement.

The school makes strenuous efforts to overcome barriers to learning. Students are well known as individuals and support is quickly and accurately targeted. All students receive good support and guidance, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The college has an extensive range of strategies that have improved

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attendance, particularly persistence absenteeism. The college is particularly successful at preventing students from being excluded from school. The vertical tutoring system and house system are well regarded by students. Transition arrangements are good, as is the support given to option choices. The college makes very good use of the expertise provided by outside agencies.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The new Principal is tenacious in her determination to improve. With able support from senior leaders, effective systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of actions planned to tackle key priorities are securely in place. Senior and middle leaders are responding well to the clear expectations that now underpin their work. They have worked effectively to secure improvements in teaching and learning through the use of coaching and modelling good practice, although some unevenness remains.

Self-evaluation is accurate, and suitable development priorities are identified. Widespread delegation of responsibility for leading work on key priorities for improvement has recently been introduced and has been readily received by staff. Data systems to track students' progress have been refined and are easy to access and interpret. Consequently, managers are able to identify underachievement quickly.

The college promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Whilst recognising the challenges facing many students, the college's leadership is determined to ensure that all students are 'aspiring to success', regardless of background or ability. The college understands its place in the neighbourhood well, and promotes students' awareness of their relationship to national and global communities. Suitable plans are in place to further promote community cohesion, and to check on their impact. Arrangements for safeguarding students are thorough and highly effective.

The governing body is well led and strongly supportive of the school. Recent restructuring and reviews of basic policies has enabled the governing body to effectively fulfil its statutory responsibilities. Governors are well informed, but their involvement in the strategic direction of the college and evaluation of its progress are not yet sufficiently widespread.

Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. Their views are regularly sought and dialogue between the college and parents plays a vital part in the progress students make.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</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>

## Views of parents and carers

The number of parental returns was not high, but was at the level of response that the school would now expect, and higher than it has been in previous years.

The parents who did respond were overwhelmingly positive, with satisfaction ratings close to 95%, higher than those in most secondary schools. This level of response was seen in relation to enjoyment, information about progress, teaching and learning, leadership and management and preparation for future life. The great majority of respondents feel that the college keeps their children safe, supporting the judgement made by inspectors.

Relatively less positive responses were made in relation to leading a healthy lifestyle, which was a surprise as inspectors judged this as a strength. Helping children with particular needs, dealing with unacceptable behaviour and taking account of parents' views and suggestions were lower, but still positive.

Most of the comments made were individual, with no common issues frequently mentioned. The majority were positive, reflecting the attitudes of students. As one parent said 'Our son is eager to attend even when he is unwell!'



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Babington Community Technology 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 109 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 750 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	43	56	51	6	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	39	63	58	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	55	44	40	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	35	62	57	7	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	41	38	61	56	2	2	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	30	68	62	6	6	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	28	65	60	9	8	3	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)	35	32	64	59	4	4	1	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	31	62	57	8	7	1	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	39	49	45	10	9	6	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	27	61	56	12	11	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	32	29	65	60	6	6	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	44	54	50	4	4	1	2

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"> <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.**



13 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Babington Community Technology College, Leicester, LE4 0SZ

Thank you for being so friendly, helpful and polite during our recent visit. From our discussions with you around the site, in meetings and in classrooms, you gave us very positive views about your college. The students who returned the questionnaires agreed with our inspection findings. These are the things that your college does particularly well:

- you feel very safe and well cared for by adults
- the college helps you to lead healthy lifestyles and you enjoy the food provided for you at lunchtimes
- students at the college are helpful and caring. You get on well together and recognise and enjoy the variety of cultures, religions and backgrounds of a diverse student population
- teaching is improving quickly in most subjects and classrooms and you understand how important your education is to your future success
- you recognise that the school has improved in recent years and that the leaders of the school are determined to provide the very best opportunities for you that they can. Many of you are now making much better progress
- the reputation of the school in the community continues to improve and you are rightly proud to belong to Babington College.

There are some areas that we think your college could improve further.

Attendance by some students could be better. We have asked the Principal and staff to explain clearly how important it is that you all attend regularly in order to achieve your potential. You can play your part by attending every day unless you are very ill.

You are achieving well in English and need to achieve as well in mathematics too. We have asked the staff to improve teaching and learning in all subjects so that more lessons are as good as the very best. This is particularly important in mathematics because this subject is vital to your future success.

We know that you will continue to work hard. On behalf of the inspection team I would like to wish every one of you success in your future lives at Babington and beyond.

Yours sincerely

David Martin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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