

Collingwood School & Media Arts College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122389
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	340139
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Ann Muxworthy

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Nixon
Headteacher	Mr Richard Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by 11 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, curricular guidance, the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, external reports, and scrutinised records of pupils' progress. Inspectors took into account the findings from the 51 parental/carers' questionnaires and from questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

- the extent to which pupils' achievement is outstanding for all key stages and all groups
- how effective provision is in securing outstanding outcomes for all groups
- how well the leadership team and governing body through monitoring are identifying strengths and weaknesses for improvement
- how well the school is supporting pupils' understanding of different communities including other religions and cultures.

Information about the school

Collingwood School and Media Arts College caters for young people, aged 4 to 16, with moderate learning difficulties and complex needs. They have a broad range of additional needs, such as autistic spectrum disorder, and currently all pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils attend from across the county of Northumberland and some have experienced significant disruption in their education prior to joining the school. Most pupils are White British and a low proportion are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no speakers of English as an additional language.

The school has attained specialist school status in media arts and has gained numerous national awards which include Healthy Schools, International Award and Investors in People status. A soft federation partnership has been developed with a local secondary school which is extending learning for pupils into sixth form.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Collingwood School and Media Arts College is an outstanding school. The school lives up to its mission statement, 'to strive to provide a warm and secure learning environment of quality based on a shared ownership.' The great majority of parents and carers are highly appreciative of the school's caring ethos which provides creativity and challenge, with comments such as, 'The school has a real sense of community and it is an excellent school with very caring staff.' The inspection findings wholly agree with these sentiments.

The highly effective headteacher and leadership team communicate their enthusiasm, sense of purpose and the school's caring ethos exceptionally well to pupils, parents and carers. The school benefits from a highly skilled and hard-working governing body. Leaders are committed to raising achievement and continual improvement through an imaginative, exciting curriculum, European and community links, and impressive use of resources for media and arts. Extremely effective partnerships introduce exciting and extended learning opportunities to give pupils creative and real experiences, leading to their increased confidence and willingness to participate in a variety of social settings. These factors give the school outstanding capacity for continued and sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement is excellent. Almost all pupils progress extremely well from their individual starting points because teachers and other adults understand fully their needs and use assessment very effectively to plan challenging work and to support their next steps in learning. The extremely well-planned and creative curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support allows accelerated progress for the majority of pupils.

Pupils love coming to school and say they feel 'valued and safe'. Their outstanding personal development makes an enormous impact on their learning. For example, pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for each other makes classrooms happy, engaging and supportive places in which to learn. Their interests and attitudes prepare them extremely well for the next stage of their education and the world of work. Pupils have many opportunities to explore their understanding of their immediate community and have some engagement with international communities and cultures; however, there are fewer opportunities for them to interact with children and young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' understanding of communities with high ethnicity and diversity.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enjoy their learning and their engagement in lessons is outstanding. Overall, they make extremely good progress in their lessons when measured against their individual starting points. Progress is nearly always better than might be expected, given their learning difficulties or in comparison to similar children with similar needs. Engagement of pupils is high as they show excellent concentration and enthusiasm, are prepared to be challenged and are greatly motivated to succeed. In one outstanding lesson pupils were able to confidently explain pyroclastic flow as 'a lava flow that covers everything in hot ash'. By the time pupils leave school all have gained qualifications, including those pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with autistic spectrum disorder. In the most recent Year 11 national tests a very high number of pupils achieved one or more GCSE with some gaining four passes and a few attaining passes in the higher grades. Correspondingly, all pupils gained Entry Level qualifications in at least seven subjects. Although attainment overall remains low, these excellent results and the progress pupils made between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 illustrates the outstanding provision they received.

Pupils are happy, friendly towards each other and staff, helpful, and listen well to one another. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle through the school's well planned programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils across the school have a strong sense of school community. Pupils' views taken through family group sessions and the school council leads to shared decision-making. They work well with partner schools on raising funds and actively engage with the local community; for example, by providing a unique cinema workshop. Good attendance levels and well-developed communication and social skills prepare them extremely well for the future. Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, although pupil experiences and understanding of other ethnic groups is not quite as strong as it could be. Pupils are caring and have a very well-developed moral sense. They have a strong sense of spirituality in their interactions with others and respect their feelings and views. Pupils develop a very good understanding of art, sport and other cultural activities that have shaped their community and can recognise similarities and differences with other communities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good and much is outstanding. The excellent relationships with teaching staff motivate pupils to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for successful learning. They use assessment extremely well and have an in-depth knowledge of pupils' individual needs which enhances and extends their learning. In highly engaging lessons teachers use their impressive specialist skills and knowledge to inspire and challenge pupils to achieve their best. The routine use of sophisticated technology with the expectation of pupils using it with minimum help, and stimulating arts media resources, provides impressive opportunities for learning. The school has a wealth of pupil assessment and comparative performance data which is used effectively to ensure planning, recording and reporting of each pupils' progress is as ambitious as possible.

The curriculum is excellent. Collingwood's status as a school for media arts is well deserved as it inspires creativity to provide impressive and unforgettable experiences that fire pupils' imaginations. This leads to high self-esteem and striking confidence in pupils. Through highly effective partnerships, pupils share experiences on sports, healthy living and musical events and have an excellent understanding of working life through business and college connections. Engaging with artists and creative professionals through the 'Creative Partnership' provides inspiring opportunities for pupils to learn.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school has created a friendly yet aspirational setting that successfully promotes learning and enjoyment equally. Transfer to sixth form is extremely well supported through excellent development of pupils'

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independence skills and opportunities to follow relevant programmes. Highly effective working together of staff, agencies and parents and carers ensures the well-being of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

All those with leadership responsibility are relentless in building on previously outstanding performance. Morale and commitment are exceptional and the school uses self-evaluation extremely well to engage and communicate with all stakeholders to improve its performance. The use of subject specialists and partners such as Connexions and film makers supports highly effective teaching, informed monitoring and outstanding achievement for most pupils. Leadership on school priorities is shared across the staff, maximising strengths and interests and ensuring best practice.

Governors are very effective and through their diverse expertise and skills have a good understanding of the school's strengths and are involved in promoting partnership and community engagement. They actively monitor the school's work and strive to improve the provision for the school. For example, recent development of the school's media suite was successful because of expert governor support at its planning stage. Governors discharge their statutory responsibilities conscientiously. Consequently, safeguarding is addressed with rigour and statutory requirements are met. School leaders act responsibly in their regard to pupil and staff safety including careful and effective risk assessments.

The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. There are a good variety of opportunities for pupils to engage with community groups within and beyond the school. However, pupils' opportunity to mix with others from different ethnic backgrounds is not as strong.

Engagement with parents and carers, and other partnerships with local schools, businesses, health professionals and the wider community are all outstanding. They add great value to pupils' learning and well-being, and enhance the school's successful status of media arts. Staff manage communications with partners and agencies extremely well to ensure effective support for pupils and their families.

The school is steadfast in its commitment to the 'individual rights of the child' and this secures outstanding equality of opportunity. Outcomes for different groups are carefully monitored to ensure they are equality positive and excellent activities and inspirational

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role models encourage enjoyment and participation. The school is a family community which successfully increases understanding of its wider community, both within Northumberland and beyond. Staff and resources are very well deployed to support pupils' needs and the school offers excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Those who did were extremely positive of the school's provision and the outcomes it achieves. The quality of teaching, pupils enjoying school and feeling safe were rated particularly highly. One comment stated, 'Staff are brilliant, and the headteacher and the staff go the extra mile in a way that exceeds my expectations.' The few negative comments were mainly about how well the school helps parents with supporting their child's learning and informing them about their child's progress. Overall, inspectors found no evidence during the inspection to support these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Collingwood School & Media Arts 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	76	11	22	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	59	18	35	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	57	20	39	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	75	12	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	59	16	31	4	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	55	23	45	0	0	0	0
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)	32	63	15	29	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	75	11	22	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	67	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	57	21	41	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	67	16	31	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	75	11	22	0	0	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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



1 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Collingwood School & Media Arts College, Morpeth, NE61 2HA

Thank you so much for being so friendly, helpful and polite when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and thoroughly enjoyed seeing your lessons and other activities. Your Media Arts studio is fabulous and the films and DVDs you have made are very interesting. You have been very creative working with a utility company in making music and adverts to help other children understand safety.

You told us how happy you are in school and we can see why. We found Collingwood to be an outstanding school. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors work extremely hard to make sure your school is the best it can be. You make excellent progress and become confident young people; you are right to care for your school. We were delighted with the many exciting activities you get to do in and out of school and creating a cinema is impressive. We think you are understanding more and more about the world and its people. Because of this, we have asked your teachers to do one thing to help you understand even more. This is to ask you to think more about people who do not speak English as their first language and how their lives may be different to yours.

We also found out that your school takes excellent care of you and helps you make friends and get on together. We were particularly impressed with how you visit Belgium to understand better about how pupils learn in schools there. Your media arts, business and enterprise are helping older pupils to be well prepared for the time they leave school. Please carry on working hard and we wish you continued success.

Yours sincerely

Ms Ann Muxworthy

Lead Inspector

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