

Sutherland Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123585
Local Authority	Telford And Wrekin
Inspection number	340376
Inspection dates	30 September –1 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Kevin Sheldrick HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	501
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Austin
Headteacher	Stephen Wall
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 25 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the college's work and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding, communications with parents, records of governor meetings and 66 parental questionnaires.

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

- The achievement of students, particularly those who entered the college with below average levels of attainment and the gifted and talented.
- The extent to which teaching is enabling all groups of students to achieve well.
- How effectively the college meets the needs of all students, particularly those who are vulnerable.
- The effectiveness of self-review in bringing about improvements over the last three years.

Information about the school

This small school takes its students from a wide range of social backgrounds, although the proportion of students entitled to free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of students who do not speak English as their main language is very low and very few are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups has reduced since the last inspection and is below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is close to the national average. The college gained specialist status for business and enterprise in 2008. The college became part of the Cooperative Trust and also achieved the Healthy School award earlier this year.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and behaviour.

Although Sutherland College is providing an inadequate standard of education, it is improving and overcoming many of the barriers that prevent students from achieving better outcomes. The college is understandably proud of its most recent examination results, which are the best ever and provide confirmation that students are making much better progress than in the period 2006 to 2008. Despite this improvement, the persistence of low attainment, combined with only satisfactory progress, is such that achievement is judged as inadequate.

Students are making better progress because the college has made major changes to the curriculum, which now meets the needs of students well, especially in Years 9 to 11. Over half the lessons seen were found to be good but, despite this, inspectors judged teaching and learning to be inadequate because too many lessons are still barely satisfactory or inadequate. Weaknesses in teaching are responsible for the low achievement and are a major reason why behaviour is inadequate. The college is successfully raising expectations amongst most staff and students about the progress that can be made through the use of challenging targets but a minority of staff do not have high enough expectations of good behaviour. As a result, off-task behaviour in lessons is tolerated and learning can be disrupted. Older students are not always sufficiently considerate to the needs of younger students as they move around the college and this can contribute to some feeling less safe. The college's effective arrangements for supporting vulnerable learners are a key factor in ensuring the outcome for feeling safe is nevertheless satisfactory. Other outcomes are also satisfactory, largely as a result of the appropriate care, support and guidance the college provides.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have an accurate view of the college's strengths and weaknesses, and more effective practice is becoming embedded. The college has confronted the weakness that exists in teaching and is taking decisive action to bring about further improvement. As well as better progress in many subjects, the college can also point to the success it has had in improving attendance, encouraging healthy living and reducing the numbers of students excluded. Year 11 students strongly hold the view that the college is a much better place than it was a few years ago. Although the college has only recently gained its business and enterprise

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specialism, the impact is apparent in terms of partnership work that has led to a greater focus on the skills needed for work. For example, a group of students is running a profitable printing business. Preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory. The definite trend of improved outcomes, together with strengths in self-review, shows that the college has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning, and raise students' achievement, by:
 - eradicating any inadequate teaching
 - supporting more effectively staff who struggle to implement the college's agreed approach to learning
 - increasing opportunities for students to be more actively involved in learning
 - ensuring students receive more consistent feedback on how to improve their work
 - developing more effective strategies to manage behaviour in lessons.
- Improve behaviour by involving students, staff and parents in producing and adopting an agreed code of conduct that promotes good and considerate behaviour, and ensuring that:
 - the code is displayed around the college and made accessible to parents as soon as possible
 - from January 2010 students' success in responding to this code is rewarded and celebrated.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Students make inconsistent progress in lessons because of the variability in the quality of teaching. Although students progressed well in many lessons seen, in too many they did not make the progress of which they were capable. Lower attaining students were found to be progressing satisfactorily, largely because they were in small classes and there was additional adult support. These students do particularly well when they are in Year 7 because they follow a more primary-orientated curriculum that eases their transition to secondary school. The college has improved its provision for gifted and talented students so they are now making better progress, a fact reflected in an increase in the number of students gaining the higher grades at GCSE in 2009.

Older students are making more rapid progress because the curriculum meets their needs well. There is evidence of improved progress in vocational subjects, science, business studies, history, business education, and information and communication technology. This improved performance resulted in above average numbers of students gaining five or more A* to C GCSE grades in 2009. Inspectors observed lessons in which students made insufficient progress in both English and mathematics. Weaker performance in these subjects, particularly mathematics, largely explains why the

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college is some way below the national average when figures for five or more A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, are considered. The college is successfully reducing the gap in attainment between boys and girls.

Students take part in at least the minimum recommended amount of physical education each week and some have more exercise through participation in extra-curricular activities. Students are aware of what they need to do to be healthy but many do not consistently put this into practice, for instance at lunchtime a minority choose to regularly eat chips at the local takeaway. Students contribute positively to the college community through their participation in many jobs around the college, including Year 10 students' involvement in a well-organised peer mentoring programme. Students sit on the local community forum and many participate in activities in local primary schools designed to promote enterprise. However, some students, including those at risk, express frustration because they feel they are not able to sufficiently influence decisions. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory but a small minority of students do not fully appreciate cultural diversity.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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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There are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Inspectors observed many good lessons in which students behaved well and made noticeable gains in their learning. Students' needs were met because they could work at their own level with just the right amount of support. In the very best lessons teachers ensured that students recognised how what they were learning linked to their personal targets. Teachers often used other adults effectively, for instance in a mathematics lesson a highly skilled teaching assistant helped lower attaining students prepare a presentation on finding the area of different shapes so they could fully participate in the final plenary. However, there were many weak lessons where students were not actively engaged in learning and this often resulted in poor behaviour which further reduced the quality of learning. Some teachers are not able to implement effectively the college's approach to learning because they struggle to match activities to the needs of students. Some do not exploit the college's new technologies and other resources to capture the interests of students. Behaviour is not consistently well managed and there is little reference to an agreed code of conduct. Too often, unacceptable behaviour is ignored so students are in the wrong frame of mind when they move on to another teacher. Feedback to students is inconsistent, with little evidence in most students' books that they are receiving the diagnostic feedback they need to improve.

The curriculum has been changed quite dramatically in recent years so that it is now well matched to students' needs. A good range of vocational subjects is offered and attention is given to helping students see the 13 to 19 pathways they can follow. Information and communication technology skills are well developed and reasonable attention is given to plug gaps in some students' literacy and numeracy understanding. The 'mini-school' Year 7 curriculum is a helpful adaptation for potentially vulnerable students new to the college. The college's business and enterprise specialism and trust status have resulted in a useful focus on the cooperative principles. For instance, links exist with young people in a part of Africa where enterprise and cooperation skills are needed merely to survive. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities are available although the college does not monitor the take-up of these to check they are matched to the students with the greatest need. Students are taking some examinations early in order to broaden their studies. For instance, more able mathematicians are studying statistics.

The 'John Hunt' programme provides a suitable short-term alternative to lessons and helps minimise exclusions although not enough effective action is taken to improve behaviour. Small classes and the existence of nurture groups help students who are potentially vulnerable to make progress. Strengths in this aspect of provision are important in ensuring that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Students receive sound impartial advice about post-16 options, but the substantial changes to the curriculum have left some students confused about their option choices.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The college is clear about its strengths and weaknesses, including the link between ineffective teaching and poor behaviour. It is taking the right actions to deal with identified shortcomings. There is still some way to go in ensuring all staff are clear about the quality of teaching needed to achieve the college's challenging targets. Planning is focused on improving in the right areas. The approach to planning effective lessons is not yet, however, resulting in enough consistency. Capable leaders are now in place at all levels, although some have yet to fully prove their effectiveness. The college meets the government's safeguarding requirements and places a high priority on the safeguarding of students, particularly those most at risk.

Governors are clear about the college's strengths and weaknesses and bring a good range of expertise to their role. They are visible around the college and have been particularly involved in the gaining of cooperative trust status. The college has increased parental attendance at meetings to consider students' progress, but has not involved parents enough in agreeing expectations around behaviour. The college is promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination through the actions it has taken to improve the achievement of boys and the gifted and talented. There are strengths in the way community cohesion is promoted in terms of the immediate locality and the international dimension. The college is correct in its evaluation that it has not yet done enough to develop the national perspective in order to improve further the community's cultural awareness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

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The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents think that their children enjoy college, that the college keeps them safe, and that the college is led and managed effectively. A very small minority of parents did not agree that college deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.

Inspectors agreed that this is the case. Parents made few comments and most of these were positive. A couple of parents thought their child did not receive enough homework. A few parents commented that the college had improved under the leadership of the current headteacher.

Of the completed questionnaires, 38 were from Year 7 parents. Many commented that their opinions were tentative because they had only a few weeks' knowledge of the college. Inspectors asked Year 11 students why so few questionnaires were returned and it appears to be the case that many did not remember to take them home.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sutherland Business and Enterprise College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the college.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the college. The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 501 students registered at the college.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	30	44	66	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	22	33	41	62	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	24	35	53	3	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	29	33	53	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	21	32	33	51	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	7	11	42	64	8	12	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	11	42	64	8	12	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	18	40	61	2	3	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	27	35	53	4	6	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	29	31	47	10	15	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	20	36	55	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	20	30	36	55	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	42	21	42	1	2	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"> ■ 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.



2 October 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Sutherland Business and Enterprise College, Telford, TF2 7JR

Following the inspection of your college, I would like to provide you with a brief summary of the inspection outcomes. I would particularly like to thank the students we interviewed for the forthright views they gave.

Despite there still being some weaknesses in the college, inspectors agree with the Year 11 students interviewed that it has improved in recent years and that it has some good features. Nevertheless, the college is being given a notice to improve because behaviour and achievement are not good enough overall. The college will receive a visit from inspectors in about six months and will undergo another inspection in about a year.

There are a number of positive features:

You are now making satisfactory progress overall and attainment is rising.

College leaders recognise which groups of students are not doing quite so well and taking steps to correct this.

Over half the lessons we observed were good.

The curriculum has improved so more of you are enjoying the courses you undertake.

The care, support and guidance given by the college are effective in ensuring that you are kept safe.

Leaders recognise the weaknesses in the college and are doing something about them.

We have asked governors and staff to improve behaviour and achievement, largely by making sure you do not experience lessons that are inadequate or barely satisfactory in supporting your learning. You can help by participating in the further development of a code of conduct, and doing your best to uphold this.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Sheldrick

Her Majesty's Inspector

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