

Clayton Hall Business and Language College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124412
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340561
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Deborah James

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1000
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Porter
Headteacher	Mr M Heuston
Date of previous school inspection	26 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The majority of the time was spent observing learning. The inspectors visited 52 lessons, observed 49 teachers and held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and a small group of governors. They observed the school's work and studied a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, department monitoring evidence and records of students' progress. Inspectors also reviewed responses to questionnaires returned from students, staff and 181 parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by students in lessons and the evidence held by the college to support their evaluation that pupils are making good progress
- the effectiveness of the curriculum, teaching and care, guidance and support in meeting the needs of boys and low ability students who appear in previous years to have made less progress
- the impact of the federation with NCHS-The Science College on leadership capacity at Clayton Hall.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized secondary school where the large majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. The school gained business and languages specialist status in 2004. It gained High Performing Specialist School status in September 2009 along with a new specialism in applied learning. It also holds the International Schools Award. Since September 2008 Clayton Hall has supported a neighbouring school, NCHS - The Science College, initially through a soft federation. In February 2010 the two schools combined as a hard federation with a single governing body and executive headteacher.

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

Clayton Hall is an inclusive caring community where individual students are supported well in developing strong moral values, self-confidence and consideration for others. As a result, students are able to make an outstanding contribution to the college and wider community. Year 11 prefects lead a number of positive initiatives across the college, undertake a range of college duties and act as mentors for younger students. Students participate enthusiastically in community activities to improve the local environment and apply their enterprise skills in local primary schools.

Students are particularly successful at GCSE, attaining results that are above the national average. These strong results combined with the enterprise skills that are well-developed through the college's specialist focus, excellent attendance and punctuality, and a comprehensive careers programme allow students to leave college well prepared for further education and training. The college has introduced a number of strategies to improve the achievement of boys and lower-ability students. These include changes to the curriculum and closer monitoring of their performance against their targets. These actions appear to have been effective in reducing the gap between these students and other groups in the current Year 11.

Despite these considerable strengths, the college has been judged satisfactory overall because although levels of attainment are above average, the progress made by students is only satisfactory. Although some teaching is good or outstanding, too much teaching remains satisfactory and as a result students are not consistently supported to make good progress. The most rapid and secure learning occurs when expectations are clear and students engage in challenging tasks that enable them to think independently. The most skilful teachers listen well and use effective questioning to check and extend individual student's learning. In other lessons teachers talk for too long, limiting opportunities for students to practise and develop new skills. The quality of marking and feedback is inconsistent with a significant amount of marking that is brief and infrequent. The most effective marking gives students clear written information about what they have achieved and how they can improve.

The college's self-evaluation closely matches the findings of the inspection in the majority of areas. However the leadership's assessment of the quality of teaching and learning is over-generous and consequently the college has not focused effectively enough on improving this key area.

The leadership team has taken on a considerable additional challenge by agreeing to support an underperforming neighbouring school. One of the college's deputy headteachers was seconded to this school and the headteacher divided his time

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between the two school sites. The local authority has recognised that this intervention has been highly effective in improving the outcomes for learners at the neighbouring school. However the partial absence of two key members of the leadership team has diluted the leadership capacity at Clayton Hall. This is acknowledged by the headteacher who is now focusing more intently on Clayton Hall. He has introduced a number of strategies to improve students' progress that are already having an impact on Year 11 students. The college's capacity to bring about further improvements is therefore satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupil progress by ensuring that at least 70% of teaching is good or better by December 2010 through:
 - planning more fast-paced lessons that include effectively differentiated learning activities for students of all abilities
 - improving questioning techniques so that teachers can assess accurately student's learning and adjust the lessons accordingly
 - ensuring that students know how well they are doing, and how to improve, through regular high quality marking.
- Increase the rigour of both whole-college and departmental systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and develop the existing teacher coaching programme so that all staff benefit from sharing current good and outstanding practice
- 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 enjoy college; they behave well in lessons and around the buildings, respond well to requests from staff and behave considerately towards each other. In lessons they are keen to learn and when offered suitably challenging activities they engage enthusiastically, supporting one another and working well independently. This year, the college has prioritised the development of personal learning and thinking skills. In some lessons the development of these skills was expertly integrated with the learning objectives; students could articulate how, for example, they had become more reflective learners. In other lessons the focus on these skills detracted from the main objective of the lesson and left students unclear about what they were trying to achieve. Where teaching is less effective the pace of learning slows considerably although the students continue to behave well and apply themselves diligently. As a result of this considerable variation in teaching, students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, only make satisfactory progress.

Students are positive, friendly and keen to talk about what they are doing. They know

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how to stay healthy and are enthusiastic about the variety and quality of sporting activities they are offered including golf and dance. They participate well in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Students and parents express confidence that the college will keep them safe. Students are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have a problem and that they will be listened to. They were particularly positive about the Year 10 student councillors who are trained to support younger ones. They also appreciated the opportunity to develop relationships with pupils of different year groups within mixed-age tutor groups. This structure gives increased responsibility to older students and additional support to younger students.

Students understand right from wrong and have numerous opportunities through the curriculum and enrichment activities to debate moral issues. Charitable fundraising and enterprise activities related to 'fair trade' add another dimension to students' moral strength. Students' enterprise skills and awareness of the world of work are developed well through the college's business and enterprise specialism. All students study for a qualification in business studies and there are plentiful opportunities to participate in Young Enterprise activities. The college has been successful in its bid to form a young chamber of commerce group. This group currently oversees five enterprise companies who promote their wares on a daily basis in the college and partner primary and secondary schools.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1

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

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The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

2

How effective is the provision?

In all lessons observed by inspectors there were good relationships between teachers and students. Good subject knowledge informs satisfactory planning but the range of activities undertaken did not always allow students to show clearly that they had made progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used with discernment to expand or illustrate teaching points but in many lessons worksheets are overused. In the best lessons, achievable targets are mixed skilfully with more aspirational ones so there is an incentive to make progress, but in other lessons, targets are not sufficiently demanding. Some students' exercise books include excellent examples of students assessing their own work and clearly demonstrate that they now know what to do to improve. Marking is of a high standard in a few subjects and the students acknowledge the extremely valuable feedback given, for example, in creative areas. However, some marking is less useful, with a focus on presentation and completion rather than prioritising the means by which learning can be improved.

At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is effectively planned with a range of academic and vocational courses to meet the needs of all groups of learners. Vocational courses are offered to suit all abilities and include courses in construction, hair and beauty and health and social care, alongside applied business and engineering courses. More-able students who have excelled in ICT or mathematics are offered access to AS level courses. As a specialist language college the large majority of students study two languages. The curriculum has undergone a major review this year, partly in response to the college's desire to develop its new specialist focus of applied learning. As a result, current Year 9 students have been offered a far wider range of vocational courses, along with increased opportunities for early examination entry and more advanced courses. This year, a nurture group has been introduced in Year 7 providing the most vulnerable students with a very supportive start to the day by continuing aspects of their primary experience through an hour of numeracy and literacy. A particularly strong feature of the curriculum is its outstanding programme of extra-curricular, enrichment and enhancement activities. Whole year groups participate in activities that add to their enjoyment and contribute to other aspects of their personal development and well being. For example, inspectors observed Year 9 students enthusiastically participating in a joint enterprise and mathematics activity focussed on understanding the world commodities market.

Students are known as individuals and a strong pastoral structure supports a variety of support strategies, including home visits. The college has good links with a number of outside agencies. Evidence was seen of the excellent provision made for students with diverse and challenging needs. A parent of a child with special educational needs commented that the college has been innovative when faced with potential problems and always endeavoured to find solutions. Very effective transition arrangements, considerably enhanced by strong partnerships with feeder primary schools, ensure that

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students who join Year 7 settle into their new college quickly and smoothly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governing body are passionately committed to developing the hard federation to support all students in the community and are convinced of the benefits for both schools in the partnership. The headteacher has galvanised the support of staff and students through this difficult period of transition. Concerns from all stakeholders have been considered carefully and a strong improvement plan for the federation has ambitious but achievable targets for the future. Governors have played a substantial role in the development of the federation. A single governing body has been created successfully from the governing bodies of the two partner schools with a common vision and strong sense of purpose.

In establishing firm foundations for the hard federation, senior leaders and the governing body are strongly driving improvement on a broader front than Clayton Hall alone. Leadership roles and responsibilities have undergone considerable change as the college has adapted its leadership structure to meet the needs of the new federation. Ambition is high for all students in the federation and senior leaders are gathering robust data on student and subject performance that is enabling appropriate intervention and improvement. Subject leaders are held accountable for the achievement of students within their departments and undertake thorough tracking and monitoring of students' progress. Nevertheless, as new leadership roles were becoming established, less attention was given to monitoring the quality of teaching than previously. Although subject leaders have some awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching in their departments, they have not adopted a rigorous approach to improving it.

Equality policies are in place and the college has accurately identified the inequality between the achievement of boys and girls and put in place effective action to address this issue. The college is building a cohesive community. It has a good understanding of its context and is beginning to promote community cohesion beyond the college. Students from different backgrounds get on well together. Partnerships with its local community are strong; the growing relationship between Clayton Hall and NCHS is providing opportunities for the sharing of best practice between senior and middle leaders at both schools. Clayton Hall supports six primary schools in language teaching

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and enterprise activities. Staff from the specialist subject areas are taking a lead in the development of the Business Administration and Finance Diploma and in promoting language learning across the authority. Business contacts offer tangible support by acting as mentors for students and young enterprise companies. Strong relationships with local agencies involved with promoting attendance and supporting vulnerable students contribute well to the college's good care guidance and support.

All requirements for the safeguarding of students were in place at the time of the inspection. The college has thorough and robust systems for assessing risk and ensuring the health and safety of staff and students.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

Around 20% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of these parents and carers, the overwhelming majority are happy with their children's experiences in the college. They agree that their children enjoy college and feel safe. A few specific concerns were raised about poor behaviour or instances of bullying, but inspectors found that behaviour around the college and in lessons was good and instances of bullying were generally dealt with effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clayton Hall Business and Language 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 181 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1000 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	30	110	61	13	7	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	31	116	64	7	4	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	22	112	62	19	10	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	26	111	61	13	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	42	23	117	65	10	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	18	108	60	32	18	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	19	122	67	18	10	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)	42	23	109	60	9	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	23	108	60	19	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	25	92	51	13	6	6	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	14	108	60	22	12	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	43	30	108	60	16	9	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	30	110	61	9	5	2	1

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



Friday 5 March 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Clayton Hall Business and Language College, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 3DN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your college recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and talking to you and were impressed with the maturity with which you answered our questions. Yours is an inclusive and caring college and you are rightly proud of it.

These are the main findings of the inspection.

Clayton Hall is a satisfactory college overall. This is because you make satisfactory progress although you get results that are above average.

The college supports you well in developing good social and moral skills and you use these skills to make an outstanding contribution to your college and wider community.

The high standards you reach at the end of Year 11, along with your excellent attendance and punctuality, prepare you well to move onto further education or training.

Some teaching is good but too many lessons lack pace and limit your opportunities to develop and practice new skills.

Marking does not always give you clear information on what you have achieved and how you can improve.

We have asked the college to make the following improvements.

Improve the progress you make by making sure that more of your lessons are good or outstanding, with better marking and a greater range of effective learning activities.

Improve the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning so that steps can be taken to help teachers share good and outstanding practice.

We would like you to help your college by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Thank you again for helping us with the inspection of your college. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah James

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