

Fullhurst Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120298
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	348911
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	816
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Scott
Headteacher	Rosie Kemp
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 45 lessons and 45 teachers. Students in Year 11 were not in school during the inspection but a scrutiny of their work was conducted. Inspectors held meetings with groups of students, staff, the Chairperson of the interim executive board, two officers of the local authority, the school's National Challenge Advisor and the Principal designate. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of students' attainment and progress, school policies, and samples of teachers' planning and assessment records.

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

- the performance of different groups of students including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and looked after children in public care
- the quality of teaching in the departments with the most and least successful examination results
- how well the curriculum meets the needs of all students
- how effectively the school's monitoring and evaluation systems promote better outcomes for students.

Information about the school

Fullhurst Community College is broadly similar in size to other secondary schools. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Nearly a quarter of the students are from minority ethnic groups and over half of these have English as an additional language. There has been a high level of staff turnover in recent years. In November 2007, inspectors judged that the school required significant improvement so it was given a notice to improve. The school was given a very clear steer about what must be improved. In December 2008 it was placed into special measures because the pace of change had been far too slow, and improvement had been unsatisfactory. This resulted in the local authority replacing the governing body with an interim executive board in July 2009. Since that time, the school has had several changes of senior leadership and will do so again as the school becomes a National Challenge Trust School in September 2010 when a new Principal and executive Principal will take up their posts.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school's drive for improvement since its previous inspection in 2008, when it was placed in special measures, has been one of steady and secure moves forward. The executive Principal has ensured that the leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development, and is very skilled in managing change. There is a clear agenda for sustaining continuous improvement through rigorous self-evaluation and action planning. Consequently the school has several areas of strength:

- it is inclusive because all students are well supported both inside and outside the classroom
- students are mostly well-behaved, friendly and keen to learn because of significant improvements in the quality of teaching
- students collaborate well in pairs and small groups and are willing to help others when they encounter difficulties
- the school's provision is often effective in helping students whose circumstances make them vulnerable with their personal and social development
- the monitoring of teaching and learning is comprehensive and systematic.

The focus on raising students' attainment is producing positive results at Key Stage 4 in English, mathematics and science with increasing proportions, particularly boys, reaching the level expected for their age. Programmes, such as one-to-one intervention and active tutorial sessions, have successfully led to improvements in classroom practice and are paying greater dividends in terms of students' outcomes. Consequently, an increasing number of students are enjoying their learning. Moreover, learning was at least satisfactory in a majority of lessons observed during the inspection, and this concurs with the school's own data that suggests that rates of progress have improved further for most groups of students this year. There are many examples of good teaching across the school but not enough to judge that teaching is good overall. This is because around two thirds of the teaching seen, although satisfactory, does not enable the students to secure good learning and progress, particularly for those of average and above ability. These positive factors, when set against the fact that the school has further work to improve the effectiveness of other departments, mean that the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Secure better learning and progress for students and increase the proportion of good teaching by:
 - making more effective use of learning objectives that focus on students' progress in individual lessons
 - ensuring that planning meets the needs of all groups of students, including those who are the most able
 - consistently enabling students to know exactly how to improve their work to reach the next level or cross a grade boundary
 - improve the use of questioning in lessons to effectively assess the progress of all students.
- Improve the effectiveness of the work of the school's leaders and managers by:
 - maintaining and developing the system for tracking and supporting the work of students to accelerate their progress and raise attainment
 - ensuring that all heads of subjects play an effective role in improving teaching and learning within their departments.
- 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 generally enjoy their lessons and are prepared to work hard. They are happy to talk of lessons that they find exciting and interesting. Work seen in lessons during the inspection, along with evidence from grading of course work and interim module assessments, indicate that students are making satisfactory progress and have made the gains expected of them. As a result, an increasing proportion of students are successful in gaining the grades they need to follow their ambitions for higher education or employment. However, a few students of average and above average ability, while making satisfactory progress, do not reach levels worthy of their capabilities. This is because teaching does not always challenge their thinking and some of the tasks they are presented with do not match their needs.

Where teaching is good, students are enthused and are challenged to make good progress. The improvement in students' behaviour, and more explicit reference of students' work to examination requirements and to grade descriptors, are contributing significantly to improving attainment and to accelerating progress. This is particularly evident in English, science, art and information and communication technology (ICT), with attainment in mathematics improving steadily. Nonetheless, students' attainment in some aspects of physical education, technology and music lag behind those found in other subjects. Attainment and progress in religious education are inadequate.

The lower attaining students often have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many are hindered by poor skills in reading, writing and some have behaviour and emotional difficulties, but all make steady progress because they respond well to the

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extra support they are given. The behaviour support unit has a marked impact. Several students testify to its effectiveness in making them reflect on their misbehaviour and reducing the likelihood of their re-offending. Consequently, there has been a dramatic reduction in the use of exclusions to manage challenging behaviour. Moreover, behaviour in the lessons observed was normally satisfactory and often good. The students' attitudes to school are more positive than at the time of the previous inspection. They report feeling safer and understand that the school is making strong efforts to help them achieve more highly. Students also appreciate the improved arrangements at lunchtime which give them a wider range of activities to enjoy. However, in some subjects, there is a legacy of disaffection which impedes progress. Students' spiritual, moral and social awareness is satisfactory, with many students having a strong sense of right and wrong. The vast majority are considerate and courteous to one another. Students make a sound contribution to the school community through their involvement in the school council. Their participation in charitable and fund-raising events ensure that students are developing a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the wider community. Recent fund raising provided a sports-adapted wheelchair to permit one student to play basketball, and there are plans to repeat this for another student's benefit later this year. There are, however, limited opportunities to develop students' knowledge of other cultures and beliefs.

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	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	3
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

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

3

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in provision are:

- the use of educational visits, after-school clubs and whole school drama productions to add richness and interest to the school life of many students
- lessons punctuated by different activities, such as discussion partners
- an ethos for learning that increasingly nurtures mutual respect, motivates students and encourages their positive self-esteem, particularly for those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.
- close monitoring of patterns of attendance and successful identification of students who are at risk of disaffection
- effective transition arrangements, especially for students whose circumstances make them vulnerable
- good support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities through detailed individual plans.

Considerable attention has been given to raising students' aspirations by a policy of early entry for GCSE examinations in English, mathematics and science with many results already successfully banked. Moreover courses in art, the performing arts, modern foreign languages and technology have been adapted so that students may take these examinations in Year 9, if their work meets requirements. Courses on offer in Key Stage 4 have been widened to include a broad range of qualifications including BTec, NVQ, Diplomas and Young Apprenticeships. Informed by progress tracking data, students' choices are carefully guided to appropriate pathways, ensuring an effective match between course requirements and students' abilities. Furthermore, the school works closely with two other local schools, a skills centre and a further education college to provide a wide range of vocational courses which are proving particularly effective in combating disaffection.

Notwithstanding all of the above, shortcomings remain, as witnessed in lessons where teaching was satisfactory and in the small number observed that were inadequate. It is in these lessons that students become passive learners because the lessons are mainly teacher led and directed; they often include too much talking by the teacher and some tasks offered to students are mundane, which lessens the progress students make. A small number of teachers do not make it clear to pupils what they are going to learn or give clear guidelines about how their success will be measured. Moreover, questions asked of students often only require the recall of information and do not require them to give extended answers or explain their thinking. The school acknowledges that these weaknesses need to be tackled if the gap is to close between what students are attaining and of which they are capable. The quality of marking in such lessons is variable and, in a few instances, not completed at all. Consequently, not all students are clear about what they need to do to improve their work and the pace of learning slows down.

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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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Strengths in leadership and management are:

The executive Principal provides effective leadership, ably supported by the acting Principal, and has moved the school forward well, often in the face of very difficult circumstances. Senior leaders have coped efficiently and effectively with the challenges posed by turbulence in staffing and have taken a firm stance to assure the quality of teaching. Staff receive open and honest feedback on the quality of their practice and, consequently, there are many examples of good teaching to see. The coaching and mentoring programme provides a good basis for enhancing teachers' professional development. However, the school recognises that there has been greater success in some subjects than in others in securing consistently good learning.

Much good work has gone into building a system that reliably tracks students' progress and attainment, and this is central to the school's success in delivering improved standards. Most of the middle leaders make a sound contribution to bringing about improvements to their departments and generally play a satisfactory role in monitoring aspects of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, in some departments the school's procedures to measure progress or monitor the quality of teaching are not rigorously or effectively applied.

The school recognises that there is more work to do in relation to community cohesion. Although the school curriculum has been audited for development opportunities, no audit has been made of the local community. Nevertheless, the school knows of the changing demographics in the area. There is a good understanding of the diverse nature of the school's ethnicity, and leaders are currently developing links with schools in the county and further afield with different socio-economic profiles. A summer school to involve parents has been put in place.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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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	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
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. Most parents and carers who responded to the school's own externally commissioned parental survey indicated that they are pleased with the quality of education and care that their child receives.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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.



8 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Fullhurst Community College, Leicester, LE3 1AH

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I am pleased to tell you that your school no longer needs extra help and this will be the final visit that we shall make. There are now many positive things to report:

- you try to listen carefully to what your teachers have to tell you
- you behave mostly well
- your school council is doing a good job on your behalf
- you told us there is always someone to talk to if you have any problems
- you are coming to school more often
- you enjoy the lunchtime activities and the drama productions.

There are still some things that need to be done to help you achieve even better results in your examinations. We have asked your teachers and leaders of subjects to:

- ensure that all teachers in all subjects keep a closer eye on your progress and make sure that important routines are the very best they can be
- make sure that everyone is given work at exactly the right level so that it is not too easy or too difficult
- make sure you know what you are aiming for in a lesson and how to improve
- make sure that teaching always helps you to make good progress, especially in mathematics, physical education, music, technology, humanities and religious education.

You can help your school improve further by continuing to try your best in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

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