

The Coleshill School - a Maths and Computing College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125746
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	348981
Inspection dates	29–30 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Clive Kempton 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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	950
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Bain
Headteacher	Mark Rhatigan
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2009
School address	Coventry Road Coleshill Birmingham
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Introduction

When the school was inspected in February 2009 it was judged to require special measures. It was asked to improve the quality of teaching and the marking of students' work; use assessment information to set challenging targets; monitor students' progress so they knew how well they were doing and what they need to do to improve; and increase the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and improvement planning at all levels of leadership. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors visited the school each term to assess the progress the school was making in addressing these issues. This visit of the school was carried out by the same HMI and two additional inspectors.

Inspectors observed 38 lessons taught by different teachers. They held meetings with the same five parents and carers seen at every monitoring visit; six with groups of students; seven with senior and middle leaders; the chair of governors; and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work and scrutinised various planning and other documentation.

Information about the school

The Coleshill School is a medium-sized secondary school and has held specialist mathematics and computing status since 2004. The school serves the local community and surrounding villages. Some students travel across the border from Solihull. It has a small but growing sixth form. The overwhelming majority of students are from White British backgrounds. Almost all students have English as their first language. The percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals are below average. The school has a strong link with Caludon Castle School in Coventry, from where an Executive Headteacher and Acting Headteacher were seconded to lead and manage Coleshill until the new headteacher and two deputy headteachers took up post in April 2010.

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

2

Main findings

Coleshill is now a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. 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. This is because the school has acted on all the recommendations from the last report in February 2009 and managed to raise GCSE attainment from below the national average to above the national average. This is a significant achievement and demonstrates the good capacity of leaders and managers at all levels to identify students who are falling behind with their work and provide timely intervention support to make sure they catch up and achieve their potential. The excellent mentoring support for Year 11 students is also being provided for those in Year 10 where projected outcomes for 2011 are even better than the current Year 11. However, this level of progress monitoring and support has not yet had time to embed fully in Year 7 to Year 9 and remains an issue for the school.

The local authority brokered outstanding support from Caludon Castle School in Coventry to improve outcomes and provision at Coleshill. Strong and lasting partnerships have been forged with Caludon to support leadership, improve the quality of teaching and learning, and provide a wider curriculum choice for sixth form students, who now study at both sites.

The turbulence and excessive staff absence has now settled down. Minimal use is made of temporary staff and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. The overwhelming majority of teaching is at least satisfactory and much is good and the new headteacher and senior staff have high expectations of continued improvement. Staff morale is high. Teachers work hard to prepare interesting lessons and act on the advice and support provided to develop their teaching skills. Subject leaders have been given more responsibility and accountability for improving teaching and attainment in their subjects and have risen to the challenge. However, some inconsistencies still remain in the quality of teaching. For example, the good and probing questioning strategies to challenge students are not used by all staff. Some teachers' lesson plans are over-complex and result in teaching becoming a series of directed tasks instead of a series of progressive learning opportunities.

The new headteacher has had an immediate impact on students and their parents and carers. The transition from the leadership of the outstanding executive and acting headteacher has been seamless, and the new headteacher has picked up and further developed the momentum of change. There is now a strong sense of ambition and determination to make Coleshill an outstanding school. Leaders and managers at all levels share this drive and can all demonstrate the impact they are having on raising attainment. Middle leaders know the strengths and weakness within their subjects and

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are provided with helpful data on students' attainment from senior managers to help identify weaknesses and implement change.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement to at least good by extending the approaches to monitoring progress used successfully at Key Stage 4.
- Improve the quality of teaching to at least 70% good or better by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use questioning strategies effectively in lessons to extend learning
 - sharpening teachers' lesson planning to focus more on learning opportunities.
- 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

When students enter the school, attainment is broadly in line with the national average. Satisfactory progress is made in Key Stage 3 and good progress is made in Key Stage 4. The accurate data on students' performance and teachers' assessments show that 87% of current Year 11 students are on track to attain five GCSE A* to C grades this year and 62% are in line to attain the same number of grades, including English and mathematics. These results, if achieved, would be ahead of the 2009 national average. Year 10 students are on track to attain even higher standards in 2011 because there are now secure support systems in place. Lesson observations conducted with members of the senior leadership team confirmed this high level of support for learning.

All students have a much stronger desire to learn than a year ago. They behave well and enjoy school. The gap between the outcomes of different groups is closing and the issue of boys' underachievement identified at the last inspection is now far less significant. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make expected progress, in line with other groups.

Attendance was below average at the last inspection (90.5%) and has improved dramatically. Now, attendance at 92.8% is above the national average. This has been achieved by an impressive system of monitoring and concerted action with individual cases. Students and their parents and carers are now aware of the impact of non-attendance and poor punctuality on their attainment and progress. Improved attendance and better attainment in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) contribute significantly to students' future economic well-being.

Students now feel safe in school because there is stronger staff presence around the site at break and lunchtimes and behaviour has improved. There is a confidence that inappropriate behaviour is quickly dealt with when it arises.

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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	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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has improved and is now satisfactory overall. Much is good. Staff now make better use of the information they have about students' learning needs and think carefully about how they can make their lessons interesting. Although there are more good elements within the teaching, there is still work to be done to improve further the way teachers check students' learning in lessons, for example through challenging questioning and making sure all students respond. Some teachers use practical activities, work in small groups, students' evaluation of their own work and that of others, and ICT to maximise pupil involvement and reinforce the learning. Students themselves say that their lessons are more interesting and that teachers now give them more feedback about how to improve their work.

The school has extended the range and type of learning opportunities at each key stage. The curriculum will meet statutory requirements in September 2010 with some elements such as design and technology and humanities being strengthened by recent appointments. A strong personal, social and health education programme contributes to students' well-being and pastoral care. Good use of visits and work experience,

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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alongside a range of work-related, sporting activities and clubs, enriches provision. Links with other schools and providers offer an alternative vocational curriculum for individual students with noticeable benefits to their confidence, attitudes and achievement. Year 9 value the opportunity to have subject choices. These opportunities help them to feel more confident and engaged with their learning. The school is planning further vocational and alternative courses to expand choice to meet the needs of all students. A new system with non-teaching leaders for each year group has improved the pastoral care of students and is appreciated by them and well supported by staff. This development and the strong procedures for keeping students safe make the school a very secure environment where they can share concerns.

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?

Leadership and management are now good and are strengths of the school. Leaders at all levels are held to account and share good practice with each other. Subject leaders have weekly line-management meetings with a member of the senior leadership team to discuss the progress of individuals or groups of students. They support individual teachers in their departments with coaching to improve skills and lesson planning. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are good. Training to develop teaching quality is provided at a number of levels: whole school, small groups of teachers or individually. This training has pulled the staff together with real purpose. More and more teachers are adapting their teaching styles to include new ideas, although inconsistencies still remain, for example in the extent and impact of questioning students in lessons.

The interim leadership and, currently, the new headteacher, have high expectations. A strong and stable leadership team is now in place for the first time for a number of years. They have collectively demonstrated their ability to improve students' outcomes significantly, and overcome identified areas of weakness. The progress currently made by all groups of students shows the school's commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination, although there is some way to go before progress is consistently good.

Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school itself is a cohesive community. Wider links are developing quickly with local primary schools and one in a very different context in Gambia, but are not yet fully in place.

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Safeguarding procedures to ensure students stay safe are robust and governors are very aware of their responsibilities. Training for staff and governors is regular and routine procedures such as fire drills are in place. Management decided to suspend, temporarily, its mathematics and computing specialist school plan. It has reviewed its specialism and has clear plans to re-launch as a business and enterprise school.

Governance is good. The Chair of the Governing Body is a regular visitor in school. He and his colleagues hold the school to account, and to ensure improvement. They use the success criteria in the post-inspection action plan to measure progress rigorously and accurately. Parents and carers have noted the improvement the school has made over the last year and the impact of the new headteacher and senior staff. One parent recognised the school's ambition with the comment, 'They don't just want to be a good school, they want to be an outstanding school.' Another simply summed up the school's progress as, 'The future looks good.' Inspectors agree.

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	2
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	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

Sixth form

The sixth form is growing in popularity due to the close collaboration with Caludon Castle School with which the teaching is shared. Projected student numbers for September 2010 are 140, an all-time high for the school, reflecting an increased confidence from students and their parents and carers. Some students travel to Caludon for their lessons. This has expanded the range of courses on offer, mostly at level 3, although a public services qualification is available at level 2. The quality of teaching in the sixth form is similar to that in the main school and improving with the various training opportunities provided. Students make satisfactory progress from their GCSE

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starting points, and attainment at AS and A- level is broadly in line with the national average. The sixth form leadership team is ambitious for sustained improvement and have a clear vision for future development. The large majority of students apply for academic courses at university and receive good support for their applications.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Due to the short notice of this inspection, parents' questionnaires were not distributed to seek their views of the school. However, HMI met with the same group of five parents at each of the four monitoring visits to gauge their perception of the progress the school was making. All were very positive about the school and how they valued the support their children receive. They were very clear about the significance of the progress the school has made over the course of the four monitoring visits from comments their children made at home, and how they felt well informed about their child's academic progress. They felt that the school could have kept them more informed about how the school was improving during special measures. HMI looked into this issue and found that the school does keep parents and carers well informed about the progress the school is making through its website, where all monitoring inspection letters have been posted.

Several spoke about their pride in the school and how they would not hesitate to recommend it to others. One said, 'I'm proud of where we are now and proud to be linked to the school.' One had noticed the new enthusiasm of the teaching staff, 'Staff are a lot happier now. There is more of a bounce about them. They are obviously enjoying what they are doing.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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 July 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Coleshill School - a Maths and Computing College, Coleshill, B46 3EX

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the inspection team when we visited your school earlier this term. We enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and watching you learn. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and how the school could continue to improve.

This was the fourth time I have returned to your school to measure the progress you are all making. I am very pleased to say that the school has improved so much that I have decided that it is now satisfactory and it continues to improve quickly. It no longer requires special measures. Well done to all of you for working so hard. When the school went into special measures your GCSE examination results were not as good as they should have been. Now, the predicted results of the current Year 11 are very impressive and above the national average. The quality of teaching has improved and you are taught by far fewer temporary teachers now. Your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. It is clear that you enjoy school more as your attendance is now better than that in most other schools. All of you told me that the school is a lot better, and more students want to learn in lessons. Your parents and carers have noticed how the school has changed too and are proud to send you to Coleshill. Those of you who need extra help get good support from the adults in the guided learning centre.

In order to keep up the momentum of improvement, I have asked your headteacher and senior staff to do the following things:

- make sure that you all make good progress
- make sure all teachers ask you challenging questions in lessons
- make sure that teaching continues to improve so that you learn more in lessons.

I will miss coming to see you all and wish you every success for the future.

Clive Kempton HMI

Her Majesty's Inspector

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