

Regents Park Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116450
Local Authority	Southampton
Inspection number	354529
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Pennington

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	812
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Stanek
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Hill
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 42 lessons and 42 teachers and held meetings with teachers, governors and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at progress data, improvement plans and school policy documents, and analysed 42 questionnaires from parents and carers and others from students and staff.

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

- attainment in mathematics
- data relating to progress in all subjects for all groups of students
- the impact of the new curriculum on outcomes and opportunities for students
- the impact of leadership on raising achievement.

Information about the school

Regents Park became a mixed school in September 2008 when boys were admitted to Year 7. Almost one third of students are from minority ethnic heritages and almost one quarter speak English as an additional language. These proportions are higher than in most schools. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is, at 38%, much higher than the national average. Most have behavioural, social and emotional needs. A large number of students join or leave the college at different times during the academic year.

Regents Park has been a specialist college for humanities and business and enterprise since 2004 and is a High Performing Specialist School, a National College School Leadership Development School and a Training School. The college secured National Healthy School Status in 2008, a Sportsmark in 2006 and re-accreditation as an Investors in People organisation at bronze level in 2010. The college is part of a soft federation with five primary phase schools.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Regents Park Community College provides a good education for its students. Students demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. This, together with an innovative curriculum, exceptionally strong care, guidance and support, and the work of leaders in monitoring and intervening to prevent underachievement, ensure that all groups of students make good progress during their time at the college.

Although teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, inspectors saw examples of lessons where teaching was securing good and occasionally outstanding progress. In these lessons, careful planning ensured a range of activities to engage and interest all students. Regular checking of learning against clear criteria allowed students and teachers to see what had been achieved and how students could make further progress. At times, however, work lacked challenge and was not sufficiently well matched to the needs of students. The pace of learning in these lessons, while remaining generally satisfactory, was slower.

GCSE results have been average for the last three years. Given students' starting points, which are generally a little lower than average, this represents good progress.

Projections for the current Year 11 are based on accurate assessment data and suggest that, for this year group, results will be significantly better. Attainment in mathematics has been low in the past. College leaders have taken action to improve this, including reviewing the curriculum to allow more time for students to study mathematics and English. Support from the local authority, together with careful monitoring and intervention by the college has significantly improved students' performance in mathematics so that it is now similar to the national average.

The contribution the students make to their college and the wider community is excellent. Indeed, the college is exceptionally successful in promoting community cohesion, within the college and further afield.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. In particular, there has been a reduction in the number of students who are persistently absent. Inspectors saw good behaviour around the college and in the large majority of lessons they observed. Students indicated in questionnaires that they do not think that behaviour is good all the time. In discussions, they explained that the behaviour of a small number of students sometimes disrupts learning.

Students feel exceptionally safe at college. They understand risks, including those relating to the use of new technologies. Incidents of bullying are uncommon and students feel confident that the school will deal effectively with any that do arise.

Leaders have devised robust systems to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's

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work. These include highly effective systems to ensure the safety of students and systems to track the progress of individuals and groups. Carefully moderated assessments generate reliable data which give an accurate picture of student progress. Incisive and successful actions to improve performance as well as highly effective and far sighted planning to manage changes to the college's character demonstrate good capacity to make further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - work in lessons is suitably challenging and matched to the needs of all students, including the small minority whose behaviour may disrupt the learning of others when their needs are not fully met
 - the pace of learning in lessons is brisk, with teachers regularly assessing progress, addressing misconceptions and reshaping activities as necessary.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Progress has generally been good over the last three years and attainment, which has been average, is improving. Learning and progress for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has been consistently good. The college has taken action to ensure that the small numbers of students with the most complex needs are well catered for. They now make the same good progress as their peers. The most progress was seen when learning goals were clearly defined and challenging questioning encouraged thinking. This was not consistent, however, and sometimes learning was no more than satisfactory because teaching strategies did not purposefully engage all students.

As well as taking part enthusiastically in activities to improve the college, such as being prefects, mentors or on college council, students make an outstanding contribution to the wider community. Among other things they prepare shoe boxes for the Rotary Club which are distributed to needy children around the world, present a one-hour live broadcast weekly on a local radio station and lead health-related activities in the federation partner schools as part of their dance and sports leadership roles.

Students develop good enterprise skills. There are regular references to enterprise across the curriculum as well as extra-curricular activities, specific lessons in Key Stage 3 and specialist subjects in Key Stage 4. They have an excellent understanding of the world of work through close links with business partners. As a result of targeted guidance by the school, the number of students who leave without a planned route into further education, training or employment has reduced significantly and now compares very favourably with national averages.

Students have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and understand the impact of diet, drugs and alcohol on their health. There is a very wide range of opportunities for

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students to engage in physical activities in after-college clubs. Many students do take advantage of these activities, but there are several who do not participate. There is good participation in drama, art and dance activities. The diversity of the college population is celebrated and students have the confidence to share aspects of their faith and beliefs with others by, for example, leading assemblies.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A feature of the better teaching observed by inspectors was the positive relationship between students and teachers. This contributed to lessons where students were confident, enthusiastic and keen to participate. New technology, including interactive whiteboards, was used effectively to promote engagement and understanding. In a mathematics lesson, students were able to 'see' the subtraction of fractions which helped them to comprehend the concept. At times, however, students lacked motivation. This was usually because teachers talked too much and did not allow students sufficient opportunities to think for themselves or to engage actively in learning.

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 innovative curriculum has been in place for two years. It has a significant impact on the progress that students make. In Key Stage 4, students have the opportunity to take some GCSE subjects at the end of Year 10, making more time available to study English and mathematics in Year 11. This has had a very positive impact on achievement, with two thirds of the current Year 11 starting the year having already gained three GCSEs at grades A* to C. Similarly, changes to the Key Stage 3 curriculum, again allowing additional time for the study of English and mathematics, have enabled younger students to make much more rapid progress in these subjects than previously. There are excellent opportunities for students to study business, enterprise, work-related and applied subjects both in and out of college. Careful timetabling means that students who study away from college do not miss out on teaching in English, mathematics and science. Fortnightly 'deep learning' days involve external partners and support students in the development of independent learning and thinking skills.

Outstanding care, guidance and support have a very positive impact on outcomes for students. Careful analysis of progress, together with a very good understanding of the circumstances of individuals, allows the college to provide highly specific, targeted support to raise aspirations and achievement. Transition into and out of the college runs smoothly because there are good links with primary schools, sixth form and further education colleges. Highly positive partnerships with external agencies, together with specialist support provided by the college, allow students to self-refer on any matters that concern them. Most students feel well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision and ambition for students is shared throughout the college. Together with senior and other leaders, she consistently communicates high expectations about securing improvement. Target setting is challenging. A striking feature of the college leadership is the robust nature of the systems in place to shape the work of the college in all areas. Tight monitoring, including analysis by student groups, ensures that any underperformance is discovered and tackled quickly. As a result of concerted action to ensure equality of opportunity, gaps in performance between different groups of students are closing rapidly. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development and make informed challenges when appropriate. They are supportive of and visible in the college.

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The college makes every effort to engage with all parents and carers through a range of media. Progress reports are sent home three times a year. Parents and carers are invited to attend an academic review day with their child's form tutor as well as a separate opportunity to meet subject teachers. The newly created parents' and carers' forum is already providing valuable feedback which is being used to adapt college practice, for example in relation to a new system for Year 7 homework. The college's safeguarding procedures are outstanding and record keeping in relation to keeping students safe is exemplary.

Partnerships, many through the college specialisms, are exceptionally successful in promoting both learning and the well-being of students. Business representatives hold weekly 'Ask the Expert' meetings to offer careers information and guidance for Key Stage 4 students, and the college has strong links with the local chamber of commerce which offers students further work-related learning opportunities.

The promotion of community cohesion is fully embedded in the work of the college. Evaluations show that actions have had a highly beneficial impact on the local and wider community, from links with another local secondary school to promote understanding of a range of cultures to work with schools abroad. The college itself is a highly cohesive community where students get along well together.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a low response to the parental questionnaires. Most of those parents and carers who responded, however, were supportive of the school. They all thought that

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the school keeps their children safe and inspectors agree. Although most agreed that they have enough information about progress, a few felt that the school does not take enough account of their concerns. Inspectors found that a great deal has been done to improve engagement with parents and carers and that this is now an area of strength.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Regents Park Community 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 812 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	10	24	26	62	2	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	12	29	30	71	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	29	23	55	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	26	29	69	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	21	28	67	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	14	28	67	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	10	31	74	1	2	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)	10	24	25	60	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	14	29	69	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	10	30	71	7	17	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	2	5	26	62	7	17	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	6	14	29	69	6	14	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	26	27	64	4	10	0	0

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

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



25 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Regents Park Community College, Southampton SO16 4GW

Thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection of your college. The inspection team enjoyed meeting with you and seeing you at work. Your college provides you with a good education. The innovative curriculum and the outstanding care, guidance and support you receive help you all to make good progress.

In the past, GCSE results in mathematics have been below average. Leaders have changed your curriculum so that you have more time to study mathematics and English. This has helped to raise attainment in both of these subjects and attainment in mathematics is now average.

You told us that you feel exceptionally safe in college and that you always have an adult you can talk to should you need to. You make an outstanding contribution to the college and wider community through, for example, college council, your weekly live local radio broadcasts and your dance and sports leaderships in your partner schools.

Inspectors saw you behaving well in lessons and around the school. You told us, however, that a small minority of you sometimes do not behave as well as you could and that this can disrupt learning.

We have asked the school to help you improve your attainment by making sure that:

- work in lessons is suitably challenging and matched to your needs
- the pace of learning in lessons is brisk and that teachers regularly check how you are getting on.

You can help by taking an active part in your lessons and by considering the impact of your behaviour on the learning of others.

Yours sincerely

Helen Pennington

Lead inspector

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