



Chesterton Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110865
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278537
Inspection dates 28 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Raymond Jardine LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Gilbert Road
School category	Community		CB4 3NY
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01223712150
Number on roll	1006	Fax number	01223300786
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs.Mary Sanders
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr. Mark Patterson

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 28 November 2005 - 29 November 2005	Inspection number 278537
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Chesterton Community College is a popular college that is situated near the centre of Cambridge. It serves a socially and ethnically diverse community. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. About three quarters of its pupils are of White British origin but pupils from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds also attend, the largest group being of Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is about average and 16 are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational need is a little below average. Attainment on entry to the school is very wide in range but overall it is about average. The college has been a Technology College since 2001 and is also designated as an International School for the past three years. The current Principal has been in post for just over a year.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors judge that the college's effectiveness is good with some outstanding features. It provides a good education across all the major aspects of its work, a view that is shared by the college. Pupils achieve standards that are considerably above average by Year 11. Taking account of their standards on entry to the college they achieve well, especially the more able pupils. The teaching is good and some is outstanding. This, and the school's very encouraging climate for learning, are key reasons for pupils' good achievements. Arrangements for pupils' care and support are good. Consequently pupils feel safe and secure. Their personal development is also good. In this ethnically diverse community, pupils enjoy learning together and behave well. They acquire a good range of skills necessary for their future working lives. While they are assessed regularly and their progress monitored, pupils are not involved enough in reviewing their own work and deciding on their next steps, an area the college is working to improve. The college aims to provide a personalised curriculum for each pupil. The curriculum is well planned and effective for the great majority of pupils but more work needs to be done to extend the range of vocational options in order to achieve this goal. The college is well led and managed. The senior management team work closely with governors to shape the college's direction and governors contribute much to its success and deservedly good reputation in the community. The college has introduced more systematic and potentially very rigorous arrangements for monitoring its performance but these are not yet fully embedded in its management cycle and their full impact is yet to be seen. The college has demonstrated through its rising standards that it has the capacity and the determination to be outstanding. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Broaden the curriculum at Key Stage 4 further to provide pupils with a personalised curriculum by increasing the range of vocational options.
- Involve pupils more fully in assessing and reviewing their progress and agreeing the next steps needed in their learning.
- Ensure that new and potentially robust systems for monitoring the school's work at every level become embedded in its management cycle.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average. Pupils' overall achievements are good and there are some outstanding features. Throughout the college, pupils make good progress in relation to their capabilities. This good progress is evident in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but in English, where the teaching and quality of leadership is particularly good, pupils' progress is outstanding. More able pupils achieve particularly well at the college, both by Year 9 and Year 11. Boys achieved better than girls in 2005, but both groups do well. Most pupils from the range of minority ethnic groups and those with special educational needs also make better than expected

progress. Overall standards in national examinations and tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are above average and have been rising, especially in English and mathematics, although science standards were not quite as good as other core subjects in 2005. The school met its targets for both English and mathematics but fell short of its science target. At Key Stage 4, standards improved considerably in 2005 compared with the previous two years when they were about average. Almost two thirds of pupils achieved five or more good GCSE passes at C grade or above and the school came close to meeting its very challenging target. When English and mathematics are included in this figure, the proportion was considerably above average and much improved compared to previous years. A high proportion of pupils achieved A* or A grades. However, standards in a few vocational courses fell short of the college's expectations in 2005. The college exceeded its technology college targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance has improved and is now similar to the national average. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy the time they spend at the college and they are highly motivated learners. They are keen to seize the many opportunities provided and make rapid progress in their work. The college is very successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and they do well because they believe in their own abilities and aim high. Clubs held outside the college day are very popular and pupils participate in many and varied community competitions and events. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel it has improved in recent years. Bullying is rare and pupils say they are confident that reported incidents are managed well. Relationships are very good and pupils and adults have a great deal of respect for each other. The college's renewed status as an International School reflects the range of opportunities provided and the success with which it celebrates pupils' culturally diverse backgrounds. Pupils learn about the major world faiths, religions and cultures and are very well prepared to take their place within contemporary British society. Pupils understand the importance of adopting safe and healthy lifestyles. They are influential on school life and contribute much to the college and wider community. The college council is well-established and has been a driving force behind improvements in the quality of the food provided at break and lunch times for example. Staff and governors are very interested in pupils' opinions and consult them regularly when monitoring the college's work. Pupils are acquiring good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) that are equipping them very well for their future lives and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding features. In the good lessons, teaching is stimulating and vibrant. Very well planned activities provide an

appropriate level of challenge for the different groups of learners. In some excellent lessons seen, teachers used a very interesting range of resources and imaginative teaching methods that engrossed pupils in learning. For example, pupils watched an excerpt from 'Romeo and Juliet', participated in lively discussions and completed challenging activity sheets in an outstanding Year 10 English lesson. The teacher's skilful questioning and dynamic teaching led to pupils making excellent progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes and most manage their lessons effectively to ensure that pupils stay focused on their learning. Most teachers know their pupils well and have established very positive relationships with them. The great majority of pupils respond well and they work hard. Skilled teaching assistants provide sensitive guidance to those with specific learning difficulties. In some subjects (for example, English and ICT), pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning and to discuss what they need to do to improve. However, this good practice is not firmly established across the college. The marking of work and provision of constructive feedback also varies in quality across the college.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The broad and balanced curriculum provides good opportunities for most learners to progress and perform well. There is a strong emphasis on technology in all years, in keeping with the specialist status of the school. The richness and diversity of the curriculum and the good achievements of pupils from minority ethnic groups are acknowledged by the extension of the college's status as an International School. The Key Stage 3 curriculum includes a wide range of modules in technology and students take a good range of creative arts, including drama. Accelerated provision is provided for higher attaining pupils in mathematics who can take GCSE in Year 9 or 10, and the most able pupils can take A level mathematics in Year 10 or 11. All pupils take a common core of subjects at Key Stage 4 and select options through discrete curriculum pathways. The extensive range of academic subject options is a strength of the curriculum with new options including media studies, dance and ICT. The curriculum is well suited to the great majority of pupils but the college is working hard to provide personalised programmes that match all pupils' aspirations and abilities. Currently, there are not enough vocational courses that are open to all pupils to achieve the college's goal. In addition, the college is currently developing a more appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the lower achieving and potentially disengaged pupils with more vocational related options and work-related courses in partnership with other institutions. Students receive good careers guidance in preparation for sixth form college and the world of work. There is a good planned programme of personal and social education that includes citizenship and promotes pupils' awareness of health and safety. There are wide and varied opportunities for enrichment activities, particularly in music and sport, with good levels of pupil participation. The breadth of extra-curricular provision supports pupils well and adds considerable enjoyment to their college experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety and welfare, including child protection, are clear, comprehensive and very robust. Excellent links with external specialist agencies provide a strong pastoral support network that ensures that vulnerable pupils receive outstanding advice and guidance as and when the need arises. The Access and Inclusion Zone provides very good support for pupils with individual gifts or talents, as well as those who are facing particular personal, social or academic difficulties. Nominated pupils may, for example, receive additional study support and help to improve their organisational skills and exam technique. Teachers and teaching assistants also work closely with class teachers to raise the achievement of specific vulnerable pupils, including those who are bilingual or from a Traveller heritage. The college has recently revised the way in which it monitors and reports pupils' academic progress. Potentially underachieving pupils are identified through this system and their progress is monitored closely by their teachers and, if necessary, their head of year. Although the new system is involving pupils in reviewing their progress and agreeing their next steps, it is not yet fully implemented and some pupils are not clear enough about their next steps to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the college are good and the impact is seen in pupils' good standards. The college's many partnerships with other institutions and its provision of a range of extended services to the community are partly founded on its specialist status. Much work has been done to extend opportunities for pupils and better meet their needs and aspirations. The principal and relatively new senior management work very well as a team and maintain a very good climate for learning. The principal's good leadership has engendered a strong commitment throughout the college to continuous improvement and a sharp focus on raising standards. The college's self-evaluation is broadly accurate. Patterns in test and examination results are thoroughly analysed to guide its work. The college improvement plan is a very thorough planning document that provides a very good basis for development. The principal has focussed much attention since his appointment on improving the monitoring and support of teaching and pupils' progress in particular to make them more systematic and central to the work of heads of faculty. In addition, from this year on, senior managers work closely with governors to undertake 'spotlight' reviews of faculties that bring out their strengths and key areas for improvement. Pupils' and parents' views are sought systematically. These improvements are potentially very robust, have the full support of staff and governors and are giving momentum to the college's efforts to improve further. However, they are recently introduced but not yet fully implemented and their full impact is yet to be seen. The college's governance is good. Governors are well informed of the college's progress in its priorities through regular reports and through their visits. Consequently, they have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They also bring much valuable expertise to the college. A strong parental

involvement ensures that the needs of the community are taken account of in shaping the college's development. Financial and other resources are carefully managed. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and an upward trend in standards that demonstrate the college's good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You will recall that we visited your college recently. We much enjoyed our time with you and would like to thank you for the help you gave us during the two days and the politeness with which we were received. We met many of you in lessons and had the opportunity to speak to some of you. Your comments helped us come to some judgements about the quality of education you receive. You told us how much you enjoy the many clubs and other additional opportunities that the college provides, especially in sports and creative arts. We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and around the college and the good relationships that you enjoy with your fellow pupils and with staff. The inspection found that the college is consistently good in all its major aspects. We have provided a full report for the principal and below we summarise the main findings about Chesterton Community College. We judged the following to be good features: - You make good progress in your various subjects and reach above average standards in national tests and examinations in Year 9 and Year 11. - Your lessons are well planned and taught so that you learn new knowledge and skills at a good rate. Some lessons we saw were outstanding. - The school takes good care of you so that you feel safe, secure and enjoy coming to school. - You are learning to understand and appreciate the diverse range of cultures that make up modern British society. - The staff are strongly committed to you and are constantly looking for ways of improving further the quality of education you receive. - The college is well-led and managed. Senior managers and the governors plan carefully for the college's further development. We found some areas that could be even better: - There is a need to broaden the range of vocational courses available to pupils of all abilities and the college is currently working to bring this about. - Pupils are not involved enough in reviewing the quality of their own work and the steps they need to take to reach their targets. - Recent improvements in the way the college monitors its performance need to be sufficiently established to be routine to its work. With all good wishes for your future at Chesterton Community College.