

Eggbuckland Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113542
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338201
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Karl Sampson

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1406
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Northey
Headteacher	Katrina Borowski
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 42 lessons, observed 42 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and students' work. They also scrutinised 108 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and a sample of students.

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

- how effectively and consistently provision meets the needs of all groups of students, including the most vulnerable
- the contribution made by technology status to school improvement
- the impact of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior and middle leaders on student outcomes
- how effectively sixth form provision meets the needs of all learners.

Information about the school

Eggbuckland Community College is a larger than average school set on the outskirts of Plymouth. The school has held technology specialist status since 1996. Most students are of White British heritage and the vast majority speak English as their first language. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than that found nationally. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural issues. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average. There is a designated resource base in the college for students with hearing impairment.

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

Eggbuckland Community College provides a satisfactory standard of education. The school is a welcoming and positive community, where students are happy and safe and benefit from good care, guidance and support. In recent years, senior leaders have made some important changes that are helping to strengthen the school's capacity for further improvement. Making these improvements has not been easy and has necessitated changes at governor and senior leader level as well as in teaching staff through retirements and restructuring. In order to best meet the needs and aspirations of a changing student population, staff at all levels have worked hard to adapt their approach and improve provision in lessons and across the curriculum. Recognising that the most significant barrier to improvement was inconsistency and variation in many areas of the college's work, the principal and senior team have:

- raised expectations and held staff more firmly to account
- put in place a more frequent and rigorous assessment and tracking system to monitor students' progress and raise achievement
- made good use of external support to develop more rigorous and robust systems for self-evaluation
- improved the way in which they observe lessons and provide feedback to staff so that it is sharper and more precise.

This work is having a positive impact, although there is still variability in the effectiveness of leaders across the school and, as a result, variability in the quality of provision and outcomes for different groups of students. Senior leaders now evaluate the school's performance with considerable accuracy, although the way in which they measure and evaluate the impact of the actions taken to support improvement is less well developed.

GCSE examination results have dipped in the last two years. Senior leaders correctly identified two reasons for this:

- the curriculum did not fully meet the changing needs and interests of all groups of students
- there was too much variability in the quality of teaching and learning.

The school has responded by making significant changes to the curriculum. A broader range of subjects is now on offer and a much larger proportion of students follow BTEC or other vocational courses through the development of personalised curriculum pathways. Although the results of the school's early entry policy in English and mathematics are encouraging, the impact of all the changes is yet to be fully seen in examination results across the curriculum. However, the curriculum is now clearly much more appropriate and as a result, students' aspirations, achievement and enjoyment are

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improving. While there is an increasing amount of good teaching, the quality is not yet consistent in all subjects. In particular, activities are not always adapted enough to challenge students of all abilities, and over-long teacher explanations sometimes inhibit opportunities for students to think for themselves and to develop and explain their ideas. Teachers mark work regularly but not all use precise subject-specific comments consistently well to make explicit what students need to do to improve their work.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate students' progress and increase the proportion of good and outstanding lessons to 85% by January 2011 by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment data consistently well when planning lessons so that work matches the needs of individual students
 - asking probing questions in lessons which give students opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully, especially the more able students
 - ensuring consistency in the use of day-to-day assessment so that all students understand the subject-specific actions that they must take to improve their work.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels on raising achievement by:
 - sharpening the way in which leaders measure and evaluate the impact of the actions that they are taking to improve students' outcomes
 - using the strong partnership established with the college improvement partner to extend the capacity of leaders and governors still further through coaching and training.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Analysis of the current Key Stage 4 results, supported by the broadly average levels of attainment seen in lessons and books, shows that all groups of students are making at least satisfactory and in some cases better progress. The college's latest data suggests that they are well placed to achieve their challenging targets by the end of this academic year.

Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the small number of hearing impaired students in the college, make similar progress to their peers because of the support they receive.

Students generally enjoy learning. The greatest gains in learning were observed in those lessons which actively involved students in their learning. These lessons were skilfully designed to challenge and interest every student, regardless of ability.

Students say that they feel cared for, supported and safe in school. Students' treatment of others is respectful and considerate. Both hearing and hearing impaired students appreciate the mutual benefits derived from working alongside each other in lessons.

Students' behaviour overall is satisfactory and improving, especially in the lessons that

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engage and motivate them. A small minority of students who returned the questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, said that there are occasions when their learning in lessons can be disrupted by others. Students report that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively.

The 'Preparation for Life' programme helps students to gain the skills they need for education, training and employment. As a result, students' aspirations are continually being raised and last year only 1.3% of students who left school did not go on to further education, employment or training.

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

How effective is the provision?

The college is rightly proud of its good care, guidance and support. Good partnerships with a range of outside agencies ensure that help is tailored to individual need. All students, including those who are more vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, benefit well from this approach.

The introduction of the house system, with students from different year groups mixed together in the same tutor group, has made a good contribution to improvement in

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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these areas.

The college has developed a comprehensive and detailed system to set targets for students and to track their progress. The resulting information is used well to identify students who could achieve more and this has helped to raise expectations, but not all teachers make full use of this information when they plan their lessons.

A strong feature is the number of partnerships established between the school and other local providers. Consequently, there is a good balance between vocational and academic courses.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and all lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and students. New technologies are used well to support learning. For example, teachers make effective use of 'soundfield' systems to support the learning of hearing impaired students.

In the best lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and skilful in encouraging learning. These lessons have a clear purpose and an effective sequence of activities that develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all students, regardless of ability.

Less effective lessons, where progress is at best satisfactory, typically have the following characteristics:

- a tendency for teachers to over-direct proceedings, with the result that students spend too much time listening passively
- learning activities that lack variety and interest and do not match the needs of all students so that not everyone is fully challenged
- questioning that rarely delves deep in order to check and develop students' understanding.

Some good and effective marking in the school gives students clear, subject-specific guidance about how they can improve the quality of their work. However, such good practice is not consistently in place. As a result, although students know their targets and how well they are doing, they are less clear about what they have to do to improve.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The principal and her senior leadership team have been successful in creating a caring ethos in the school in which all students are valued and respected. They provide a clear direction and have galvanised the efforts of the college to seek further improvement. After a second consecutive fall in results in 2009, they have successfully driven through

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a wide range of improvements in a relatively short time. Recent changes have strengthened the systems that support monitoring and accountability across the college. However, these changes are still at a relatively early stage and the effectiveness of leadership across the school is uneven. Actions taken sometimes lack clarity and precision with regard to evaluating the impact they have had on student outcomes.

Weaker teaching has been tackled well and is supported by a more effective programme of training and coaching. External support has been utilised effectively to complement, challenge and refine the work of the senior team and the leaders of the key subjects of English, mathematics and the technology specialism.

Governors provide good support and satisfactory challenge. Their confidence and expertise in evaluating the performance of the school in relation to national expectations, and in holding it to account, are growing. They are also linking more effectively to departments.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The college has a number of established international links and engages well with the local community through its extended services provision. Students' understanding of life in other communities across Britain is not as well developed.

The college works closely with a wide range of partners and this has had a significant impact in securing improvements in the quality of the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support. Effective procedures are in place to ensure students' safety, and all current safeguarding requirements are met.

The impact of the college's specialist technology status has been uneven. It has been good in developing specialist areas such as engineering and food technology, as well as to support teaching through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. However, staffing issues have affected students' progress in some technology subjects. Staffing has now stabilised and the department has responded well to the drive to improve teaching and develop a more appropriate technology curriculum.

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	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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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 quality of sixth form provision is satisfactory overall, although it is improving and has a number of strengths. The quality of teaching mirrors that of the main college, and is satisfactory overall. Students generally make satisfactory progress when following A-level courses, although there is variability between subjects. Students achieve well in the BTEC courses for sports studies and for performing arts.

After a slight dip in results in 2009, sixth form leaders have made good curriculum changes and strengthened systems for monitoring student and subject performance. Checks on the progress of current Year 12 and 13 students show that progress is accelerating and attainment is rising. However, some inconsistency remains because monitoring and evaluation are not always sufficiently focused on measuring the impact of provision on learning outcomes.

The curriculum does a good job in providing a range of pathways that are well matched to the needs and interests of students. Students feel well cared for and supported, and their personal development is good. The college is successful in raising students' aspirations and it prepares them well for higher education, training and employment.

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

Of the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire, the large majority responded positively to every statement. Parents are particularly appreciative of the school's arrangements to keep their children safe and the extent to which their children enjoy school. A small minority of parents expressed concern about behaviour in some lessons. The inspection team judged that behaviour was at least satisfactory and that the school has effective provision and procedures in place to support the improvements in behaviour throughout the school. A few parents made comments which related to the variability in the quality of teaching. This accorded with both the college's own evaluation and the findings of the inspection team.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Eggbuckland 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 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1406 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	17	76	70	12	11	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	23	21	77	71	4	4	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	23	63	58	13	12	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	19	61	56	19	18	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	17	16	59	55	24	22	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	14	60	56	26	24	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	10	66	61	24	22	2	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)	14	13	62	57	19	18	5	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	18	64	59	18	17	5	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	11	58	54	20	19	13	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	14	63	58	17	16	8	7
The school is led and managed effectively	14	13	64	59	16	15	8	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	19	61	56	18	17	4	4

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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:	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. ■ 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.



29 April 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Eggbuckland Community College, Plymouth PL6 5YB

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. We judged the college to be satisfactory and improving. It has a positive atmosphere and students are polite and friendly. Staff care for and support you well. You told us you feel safe and we were particularly impressed by the way in which the college helps to prepare you for life beyond school.

Achievement has dipped in the last two years. The school's leaders worked out that this was due to two things: a curriculum which was rather 'traditional' and didn't interest everyone, and variation in the quality of lessons.

The curriculum has developed and you are able to follow a much broader range of courses that better meet your needs and interests. The college's leaders are also working to improve the consistency of lesson quality, and are aware that your lessons don't always challenge you or help you to progress as quickly as you could.

In order to improve further, we have asked the college to concentrate on two things in particular:

- Improve teaching so that more of it is consistently good or better and accelerates your progress by:
- ensuring all teachers provide you with challenging learning activities which engage you more actively in learning
- allowing you enough time to develop and explain your ideas
- ensuring that teachers consistently give you better feedback on your work so that you always know how to improve in each subject.
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels on raising achievement by ensuring that all leaders monitor and evaluate the impact of their actions so that they know how well they are working.

You can certainly help your teachers with some of these things.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to the inspection. Very best wishes for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Karl Sampson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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