

Cranbury College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134984
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	341588
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Blackband

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

Type of school	Pupil referral unit
School category	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils	5–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Shotts
Headteacher	Gillian Dunlop
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including 12 parents' questionnaires, 53 pupil questionnaires and 35 staff questionnaires.

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

- achievement and progress of all pupils from their starting points
- the quality of assessment procedures across the college and how effectively this translates into effective planning and target setting
- the quality of teaching throughout the school
- the level of student attendance and the measures the college staff are taking to improve this.

Information about the school

Cranbury College is situated on five separate sites. The college has been in existence since September 2008 and provides for students with a wide range of educational needs including students who are presently excluded or at risk of exclusion from mainstream schools; those who are sick in hospital or at home; those students too anxious or ill to attend school; students awaiting placement in a special school; students who have been referred by their mainstream school for a short time-limited programme (BAC4) learning; and those awaiting a new placement. The college also provides a behaviour support service for primary and secondary students. These students, the majority of which are secondary aged, remain in their mainstream schools. A large majority of students are White British with a very small minority from other ethnic groups. There are currently twice as many boys as girls. In the pupil referral unit (PRU) as a whole, there are 11 primary aged students. There are two looked after children.

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

The college provides a satisfactory education. There are, however, some good features. There is a strong focus on improving areas of weakness. As a result, there is a trend of improvement although college leaders are fully aware that further development is necessary. There have been significant improvements in the effectiveness of leadership and management since the appointment of key members of the leadership team. The experience and expertise of the headteacher has enabled her to create a strong management structure. Although recent in development, leaders have established a range of rigorous monitoring activities relating to teaching, the students' performance and their behaviour and attitudes to learning. The college evaluates its work with increasing accuracy. There are well-constructed and reviewed action plans which are appropriately focused on the priorities for improvement. The relatively newly formed management committee is beginning to develop effective monitoring strategies. Members are active in supporting and challenging the college in its efforts to improve. There are early signs that these procedures are beginning to raise standards. As a result, the college has a satisfactory and rapidly developing capacity to sustain this improvement. Many students enter the college with negative attitudes to learning and with a history of disrupted schooling. Once there, they gain self-esteem and motivation to succeed. This plays a vital part in underpinning their academic progress.

In relation to their starting points, all students make satisfactory progress in their learning. Most students make good progress in elements of their personal development although their behaviour and attendance remain satisfactory. Although the college appropriately tracks students' progress towards their personal targets, particularly in relation to behaviour, it is less effective in tracking academic progress. Students are tested when they start at the college to establish their capabilities in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. However, the college has not analysed and used this data effectively to raise students' attainment and increase progress. Very recent development has enabled leaders to establish a robust system of tracking students' performance which is just beginning to be of use in collecting and coordinating data.

Teaching standards are satisfactory. There are positive relationships between students and teachers, and assistants give students a good level of support. The quality of the assessment of students' work, however, is not as good as it should be and lacks consistency. Leaders are aware of this and the college is developing appropriate methods to record the day-to-day progress which students make. The procedures have not yet had time to make a significant impact. As a result, targets for students are not generally well coordinated or focused and this slows down the pace of their progress. Students are not clear enough about their own progress or how to improve their work.

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In contrast, the students have a good understanding of their progress in improving their behaviour. This has a positive impact on their achievement and on their personal development. The curriculum provision is good and enriched by well-planned opportunities to interact with the community. There is good provision for students to develop work-related skills and the students are motivated by a variety of opportunities to prepare themselves for college or further training when they leave.. Parents and carers are generally pleased for their children to attend, knowing they will be well looked after and safe. A minority, however, still retain concerns about the standards of behaviour and about the progress made by their son or daughter. The students value what the college offers them. They generally enjoy coming to the college and this is clear from the relaxed and friendly atmosphere and the gradually improving attendance of many students. Despite the school's strenuous efforts, however, overall attendance levels remain just satisfactory and there is a minority of students whose poor attendance gives cause for concern.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

■ Improve assessment processes:

- to provide focused, accurate and regular evaluations of students' progress
- by ensuring staff are fully trained in all aspects of assessment and that processes are suitably monitored.
- Provide students with clear learning targets which help them understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Further improve attendance.

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

The students' attainment on entry to the college is generally below average. Once there, however, students begin to show improvement in their attitudes to learning. As a result, most students make satisfactory progress with a few making good progress. Students in hospital and those educated at home also make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave in Year 11, the students' achievements are not significantly lower than those expected of mainstream students. However, the data on students' performance are not yet effectively analysed and used to help raise their attainment further.

The small number of primary aged pupils make generally good progress. This enables some pupils to make successful moves back into mainstream secondary education. The college records show that most students make satisfactory progress in reading and spelling. Most secondary students in Year 11 gain GCSE or Entry Level qualifications in English and mathematics. The college leaders are aware, however, that the performance of some higher ability students could be extended further. Some students also achieve less well because of their poor rates of attendance. The students in the vocationally oriented CRED provision gain a variety of qualifications in the basic skills of English and mathematics and in a range of work-related accreditation. Secondary students

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throughout the pupil referral unit (PRU) achieve well in GCSE art qualifications. There is no evidence of underachievement by any group of students. For example, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve equally well relative to their starting points.

The students feel safe at the college. Bullying is rarely seen and is dealt with effectively by the staff. Almost all students feel that staff know them well and deal with their problems quickly and appropriately. Their behaviour is generally satisfactory in and out of lessons and students are considerate towards each other. When a student's conduct becomes unacceptable, staff deal with it effectively and with consideration for the student involved. This adds to the students' feeling of security and has a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. Mainstream primary and secondary students supported by the college's behaviour support service make good progress in reaching challenging personal targets. The incidence of fixed-term exclusion has fallen significantly since the college opened. The students' moral and social development is good. Staff take every opportunity to help students gain the ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to understand the consequences of their actions. All secondary students are involved in the student council and take a full part in cooperating with other students to influence the development of facilities at the college. Some students have worked with local primary pupils to develop art work and others have acted as volunteers on local community projects. The students learn to appreciate cultural diversity, for instance through 'themed' days on a variety of social, ethnic and religious groups.

The students have a good grasp of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and they take part enthusiastically in the many and varied opportunities for physical activity. They develop a good understanding of workplace and vocational skills. Throughout the school, they practise basic skills of literacy and numeracy, they learn to work in teams, to solve problems and organise activities. Older students gain valuable experience of working life through work experience and vocational elements in the curriculum. Attendance rates have risen slightly over the last year. A minority of students, however, have high absence rates. This has a negative effect on their progress.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is satisfactory. Underpinning the quality of teaching and learning are the good working relationships between students and adults. On many occasions students receive a high level of individual tuition and this adds to their confidence in tackling new work. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team and any instances of misbehaviour are dealt with calmly and sensitively, disruption to learning being minimised. Students' progress towards their personal targets in relation to their behaviour, attitudes and relationships is monitored carefully. The monitoring and targeting of students' academic progress has some weaknesses. There are inconsistencies in the way different teachers record the progress which the students make. This sometimes results in less effective recording of each small step in learning. As a result, the teachers are not always confident to sharpen students' overall learning targets. Information and communication technology is used appropriately to support teaching and learning. For instance, it was used effectively in an art lesson to help in researching pictures which would then be transformed into a collage created by the students. At the start of lessons, students are usually made aware of what is expected of them. At the end, however, there is sometimes insufficient attention paid to recapping what has actually been learned.

Curricular provision, including the development of skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, is good. These skills are practised in most learning activities. Learning is generally well adapted to the students' interests and abilities. The students have many opportunities to develop their learning in the local community through voluntary activities and through a comprehensive and effective

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programme of work experience. A very good range of enrichment activities, which are all suitably accredited, are available including vocational experiences such as gardening, beauty therapy and motor vehicle maintenance. Besides these the students have access to a range of activities such as fishing, 'Street-dance' and 'Plug 'n Play' ' which gives them first-hand experience of work in a recording studio. These experiences play a positive role in teaching students how to behave and in convincing them that new things can be learned in different situations.

The college provides an effective caring and supportive environment for students. The students in hospital or educated at home also receive a high level of individual tuition and pastoral support. The college is particularly effective in how it supports each individual, including the most vulnerable, in very specific ways. All students have personal tutors and access to group therapeutic work and counselling. The behaviour support provision is well received by schools and careful and effective preparation is given to the successful reintegration of students where appropriate. The college has developed a good system of using multi-disciplinary reviews which are attended by a majority of parents and carers. The students are well prepared for leaving school and this has been successful in encouraging the majority of students to take up further education, employment or training. Although the college's procedures for reducing absence work well with most students, the repeated absence of a small minority is proving more difficult 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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team has been strengthened over the last few months by new appointments. Leaders have a good grasp of the college's strengths and weaknesses and have begun to work effectively to improve important aspects of provision. The monitoring of teaching and curriculum provision has become more rigorous and there are noticeable recent improvements. The management committee is beginning to provide useful expertise in the oversight and evaluation of the college's performance. There are good relationships with parents and excellent links with other schools which are very helpful in providing subject expertise to college staff. Safeguarding arrangements are excellent and surpass government guidelines. A keen focus on respect, rights and responsibilities underpins the college's promotion of equality and the tackling of discrimination. There is, however, only limited evidence of the success of

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leaders in promoting community cohesion beyond the college.

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Those parents and carers who responded were generally positive about the college and what it has done for their children. In particular, they felt well informed and able to support their children's learning. They were pleased with the efforts of staff. One parent commented, 'I feel that all the teachers put in a lot of effort', supported by others who typically wrote, 'I feel they have done their utmost to give him an education'. There were a few concerns, however, about the standards of behaviour and whether their children had made enough progress. Inspectors agreed that overall, both the students' progress and their behaviour was satisfactory rather than good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at Cranbury 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 12 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	1	8	7	60	2	17	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	2	17	6	50	1	8	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	4	33	8	66	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	2	17	7	60	2	17	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	3	25	8	66	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	2	17	9	75	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	3	25	6	50	1	8	0	0
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)	1	8	8	66	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	5	42	7	60	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	2	17	8	66	1	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	1	17	9	75	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	1	8	9	75	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	4	33	6	50	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



9 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Cranbury College, Reading RG30 2TS

Not long ago my colleague and I came to the college to see how you were getting on and whether we could suggest anything to make the college better. You made us very welcome and we enjoyed meeting some of you in the classroom and during the discussions we had with you.

We were only with you for two days. That was, however, long enough for us to see that you enjoy being at the college and that your behaviour continues to improve. That means you have developed more confidence in your own abilities and understand the importance of doing well in your learning and preparing yourselves as well as you can for your adult life. The college gives you a satisfactory education. There are some strengths and a few areas to improve. These are the main strengths of the school:

- You are nearly all working hard and starting to make better progress in your learning, your behaviour and your personal development.
- You have a good range of activities, including a wide range of well-planned programmes to prepare you for when you go on to further education or training after you leave the college.
- All the adults have a real interest in your welfare and look after you well. The arrangements to keep you safe are excellent.

I think the college could improve further in the following ways:

- All the improvements you make in your work should be clearly written down by your teachers.
- This information should be used more effectively to give you a better idea of what you need to do to improve your work.
- The college should try even harder to encourage those of you with poor attendance to attend more often.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Mel Blackband

Lead Inspector

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