

Oakmead College of Technology

Inspection report

Unique reference number	113881
Local authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	378768
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
Lead inspector	John Seal HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	0–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1168
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Waterman
Headteacher	Annetta Minard
Date of previous school inspection	5–6 November 2008
School address	Duck Lane Bournemouth BH11 9JJ
Telephone number	01202 774600
Fax number	01202 774627
Email address	office@oakmead.bournemouth.sch.uk

Registered childcare provision	Little Oaks
Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision	25
Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision	5–6 November 2008

Age group	0–19
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Seal	Her Majesty's Inspector
Charlotte Evers	Additional Inspector
David Howley	Additional Inspector
Allan Barfoot	Additional Inspector
Jim McVeigh	Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 38 teachers teaching 38 lessons, some of which were joint observations with the executive headteacher and other senior members of staff. Inspectors spoke to different students in meetings, during lessons and at break times. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, the safeguarding policies and the minutes of the governing body. Also, they analysed 96 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by students and staff.

Information about the school

The college is larger than the average-sized secondary school and holds specialist status for technology. It is located within a selective secondary school system. The vast majority of students are of White British heritage. A very small number of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The percentage of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is above that found in most schools. The college has exceeded the government's floor targets for academic performance, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. The governing body manages an on-site childcare and nursery provision which was inspected at the same time as the college. In September 2011, the college federated with the main contributory primary school. There are established plans in place for the college and primary school to become academies by September 2012.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The sixth form is good. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The key strength of the college is the effective and flexible approach taken to ensure that all of the widely diverse student population are included in a positive and productive learning environment. The slightly lower-than-average attainment for English and mathematics and the small proportion of lessons that are satisfactory hinder the school from being outstanding.
- Students' progress is good, being significantly higher than that seen nationally, from very low starting points. As a result, levels of attainment have risen year on year since the last inspection and the gap between the college and the national average is closing rapidly.
- Most lessons are taught well. In the best lessons, teachers plan practical and interesting activities that closely meet students' needs and abilities. Students make good progress and are keen to learn. In the smaller number of satisfactory lessons, students receive the same work regardless of their abilities and needs, marking is not consistent and introductions and explanations are too long.
- Students behave well in lessons, when moving around the school and during break times. Permanent exclusions are non-existent and have been so for 13 years. The small number of fixed-term exclusions is declining and attendance is above average.
- The college is well led and managed. The senior leadership team and middle managers are ambitious and committed to raising standards of attainment. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective in improving the quality of teaching. The governing body demonstrates a clear knowledge of what the school does well and where it needs to improve next. It is robust in its challenge and support, holding the school to account effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the college's effective improvement systems maintain the strong focus

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

on raising all students' attainment so that it is at least in line or higher than the national average, especially in Key Stage 4 by:

- ensuring all teachers' assessment strategies, including marking, consistently provide students with activities and feedback that precisely meet their needs
- shortening the amount of time that teachers spend on introductions and explanations in order to strengthen students' ability to be responsible for their own learning by developing their skills for independent learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The proportion of students who achieved five GCSEs at grades A* to C including science were significantly above average in 2011, but the number gaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was below average. Students' work seen during the inspection, lessons observed and the college's analysis of assessment information indicate that the progress students are making continues to accelerate. This was especially evident in English, mathematics, science and geography lessons. As a result, the proportions of students whose standards of attainment are in line with, or better than, average continue to increase. The college is aware that in the past, the performance of some groups, including boys and those students eligible for free school meals, has been the slowest to respond to the school's additional support. Consequently it has put in place more focused and effective systems to support those students identified from different groups and they are beginning to close the gap. Students in the sixth form are making equally good progress, especially in the wide variety of vocational courses.

Students with disabilities and/or special needs make good progress, including those in the sixth form. The majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires agreed with inspectors that their children made good progress.

Quality of teaching

The high proportion of good lessons leads to students making good progress in most subjects. In the most effective lessons, students have positive attitudes towards their learning because of the skilful strategies employed by teachers in developing positive relationships. Good questioning techniques challenge students to think and they are given time for reflection before answering questions. Lesson planning takes into account the different needs and abilities of students and consists of a range of well-planned activities. Good examples of this were seen during the inspection, particularly in science. As a result, students are well supported and challenged to make as much progress as possible. Students are encouraged to self-assess and there were some good examples of group and peer assessments in the sixth form. For example, in a performing arts lesson, two groups were assessing each other's dance routines and offering challenging improvements.

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The younger students in Years 7 to 8 are provided with 'real-life' activities to develop their thinking and understanding; for example, they were observed discussing the lifestyles of different passengers on the 'Titanic'. Teachers provide students with useful 'examination tips' and encourage them to use the grade criteria from examination syllabuses to make further improvements. Teachers give clear, brief and relevant explanations and ensure that lessons build on students' prior learning. Marking is used to good effect to provide students with suggestions for their next steps. However, grammar and spelling are not consistently marked across all subjects.

Students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. There are a range of activities where they can work well together. As a result, they develop positive working relationships and build team skills. In the small number of lessons where teaching is less effective, planning and activities are often the same for all, regardless of students' needs and abilities. Work is either too easy or not challenging enough. Teachers' lengthy explanations and introductions often hinder the development of students' learning skills by not allowing enough time, opportunities or support to develop strategies for independent learning. On rare occasions, lessons are disrupted by a few students who have behavioural difficulties, as a small number of teachers do not adhere to the school's behaviour procedures and policies, although these incidents are swiftly followed up by senior managers. A real strength of the college is the organisation of the curriculum to match the needs of the diverse groups across the key stages, becoming more personalised for the older students in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Work-related courses are extremely wide ranging and varied, and tailored well to suit the different needs of students. The students spoken to, and a large majority who returned questionnaires, strongly agreed that they are well taught. The parental questionnaires were also positive, which supports the evidence seen during the inspection.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school prides itself on the very low rate of fixed-term exclusions. The very small number of bullying and racist incidents are reported and tackled effectively. Students with behavioural difficulties are provided with a wide range of alternative courses and learning environments. Behaviour mentors have key roles in maintaining the calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school. A significant number of the small amount of parental questionnaires returned indicated that they had some concerns about students' behaviour. This issue was looked into in great detail by the inspection team and there was no evidence to substantiate their concerns. Students have opportunities to work with different partners of the school; for example, during the inspection, a small group of students who are taking part in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course visited local construction sites as part of a planned long-term work experience programme. Younger students who may be at risk of exclusion are provided with short-term support in the college's 'Alternative Learning Provision' (ALP), a resource situated in the federated primary school. As a result, these students receive individual and small-group support with

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their learning before being reintegrated into the college. In lessons and around the school, behaviour is generally good. Students who spoke to inspectors and returned questionnaires indicated that behaviour in lessons was usually good but, in a few instances, where teachers' behaviour management skills were not consistent with the college's policies and procedures, a small number of lessons were disrupted for a small amount of time before the issue was dealt with correctly.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and managers are effectively led by the executive headteacher. The leadership team is clear about its commitment and focus on ensuring the quality of teaching continues to improve in order to raise students' attainment. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet current government requirements. The governing body know the college well and provide good challenge when holding it to account. Plans for improvement clearly highlight the college's priorities. The year-on-year improvements since the last inspection are a result of effective monitoring and evaluation of the quality of lessons by leaders and managers. Teachers' performance management is directly linked to students' progress and their training and development programmes match the college's priorities. Robust, frequent and accurate systems for checking students' rates of progress are in place. These are used well to provide appropriate and prompt support for students and detailed levels of challenge for teachers by middle managers.

The curriculum is good and students' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted well. This can be seen in the way the college meets the needs of different groups of students and is highly personalised. Students in the sixth form are well supported and provided with a good range of information, guidance and support. One student who uses a wheelchair said, 'this college did for me in my first nine days what my previous college couldn't do in nine months'. Other students talked about how they had left at the end of Key Stage 4 to attend other colleges but soon returned because of the effective, caring and personalised support they received. Leaders at all levels are highly effective at promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Consequently, there is an atmosphere of tolerance and harmony. The consistent improvements over time and the clear view on how to improve further from all senior leaders and managers provide the college with good capacity to improve further.

The Early Years Foundation Stage delivered in the registered childcare provision

Babies and children are provided with a safe and secure environment and are given effective care and attention. The nursery has strong links with parents and carers, resulting in positive relationships. Children make good sustained progress from very low starting points, especially in communication and social skills. There is a good team approach across the setting and the staff’s effective planning ensures children have access to a good range of resources and activities. The well-qualified staff are conscientious in how they complete the assessments of individual children, although the overall views and analysis of this information are still developing. The outdoor learning environment has improved since the last inspection and there are good plans to enrich this area even further. The nursery is led well by the enthusiastic nursery leader. All areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed because of the well-managed plan for improvement. This plan accurately informs leaders’ self-evaluation of the setting so that they are clear in knowing what to do to improve the setting further. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet requirements and there are strong links with external agencies. As a result of the good leadership and management, the strong and cohesive team has created a caring, warm and friendly place for children and babies to develop safely and happily.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage of the registered childcare provision, inspected under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage for the registered provision	2

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 March 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Oakmead College of Technology, Bournemouth BH11 9JJ

We enjoyed our visit to your school recently. Thank you for the way you welcomed us. Those of you who spoke to us and returned questionnaires said you felt safe and cared for at the school and that adults were good at making sure you are looked after. Most of you said that behaviour was good, but some of you felt that in a few lessons, a small number of teachers did not always follow the school's behaviour management procedures. Although there are a few occasions when this happens, you also told us that senior staff act promptly to minimise any serious interruptions to your learning. We have judged your school to be good. Here are some examples of what the school does well.

- It encourages you to improve your attendance which is now above average.
- Every year, more of you achieve better GCSE results.
- There are many good lessons across most subjects.
- The leaders and managers of the school, including the governors, do a good job.
- The sixth form is led extremely well, helping many of you gain good grades and qualifications for work and further education.
- The nursery provision looks after the younger children well and they make good progress because it is led well.

We discussed with your headteacher, staff and governors about what would help the school become even better. We agreed with their plans which have identified increasing the number of your lessons that need to be taught well in order to help more of you gain better examination results.

The team wish you every success in the future and hope that you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at Oakmead.

Yours sincerely

John Seal
Her Majesty's Inspector

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