

King Edward VI Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113520
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	378724
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Jonathan Palk HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,876
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	521
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Collings
Headteacher	Kate Mason
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 May 2009
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Forty-two lessons were observed, taught by 40 teachers. Meetings were held with students, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the college's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation as well as 265 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and students.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the college's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is students' attainment in English, mathematics and science improving strongly?
- Are the effective features of learning in lessons, identified by the college evaluation and at the last inspection, being adopted consistently across the college?
- How well do all college leaders and managers successfully tackle areas of weakness in students' performance?
- How much impact do the partnerships have on student outcomes?

Information about the school

The college is larger than the average secondary school. Its specialism is in the performing arts. Education for students in the sixth form is largely towards A-level qualifications with a small number of vocational courses offered and the International Baccalaureate. The school works in partnership with other post-16 local providers. The proportions of students from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are small. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Since the last inspection, there has been significant staff mobility at senior and middle leadership levels. The principal started in post shortly after the last inspection.

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

King Edward VI Community College provides a satisfactory standard of education. Academic results have continued to improve since the last inspection in line with national trends, although there are variations in the achievements of students between the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The strong and determined senior leadership is very aware of the reasons for such variable performance and has taken the necessary action to address this. Teaching, while satisfactory, is improving and, as a result, students are achieving more. Important improvements have been made to systems for assessing and tracking students across the college. This ensures leaders and teachers have the required information on individual students and can regularly check on their progress towards challenging targets.

The manner in which staff care for students and keep them safe is a strength in the college's work. The students' attitudes to learning in lessons are extremely positive. They attend well and enjoy their experiences across a wide range of activity. There have been particular improvements in sixth form provision. The college's specialism in performing arts makes a positive contribution to the inclusive nature of the college, and provides many opportunities for students to contribute to the life of the wider community. As a consequence, students develop strong inter-personal skills. However, these qualities are not utilised fully in all lessons. While in the best lessons teachers establish clear targets for students and work toward these with pace, too many lessons are overly teacher directed. There is a lack of determination by some of the teachers to raise expectations through challenging questions or use their assessment information to plan lessons that match work to the learning needs of all groups of students in the class.

The college is increasingly well placed to sustain and continue its improvement. Key to this is senior leaders' very accurate and precise understanding of the college's strengths and weaknesses. While they recognise the improvements that have been made, they also understand that there is still much to do. They rightly recognise that the key priority is to improve the consistency of teaching. Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the college's effectiveness and play an effective role in its improvement. The college's capacity for further improvement is, however, currently satisfactory rather than good. This is because much of the monitoring and development work has been led by the senior team. Much work is going on to strengthen the role that middle leaders play in this process, but their impact on the college's improvements is currently variable.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching and learning is good, in particular by:
 - using assessment information more rigorously to set out expectations of students' achievements in lessons
 - supporting students through explaining the learning objectives and helping them build their ideas through quality questioning so that all students are challenged appropriately
 - ensuring that teachers check students' learning more carefully as the lesson proceeds.

- Provide more support and training for middle leaders in carrying out their strategic roles and responsibilities to improve learning, in particular by:
 - developing their skills in evaluating data and assessing the impact of teaching on learning in lessons.

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

Students make satisfactory progress as they move through the college and reach average levels by the end of Year 11. Examination results are rising; although there was a particular setback this year in the proportion of students gaining higher grades in mathematics at GCSE. Proportions of students gaining five or more higher grades have continued to increase, although the higher level attainment in performing arts is offset by weaker performance in other subjects. Students, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English and achievements are above average most years. The use of intervention to support lower-achieving students in Years 10 and 11 is effective and ensures that these students catch up to where they should be. The most recent analysis of progress between Years 8 and 9 shows greater consistency between different groups of learners, due to timely interventions and improving teaching. However, good teaching is not yet sufficiently or consistently present in all lessons to allow the college to reduce the amount of intensive intervention and move to more sustainable good quality learning in lessons for all students.

Students say they enjoy school and respond positively, particularly where the teaching is good. Students report that some combinations of students cause disruption to lessons, but this is reducing. Behaviour has got better and there is very little exclusion. Students move quickly and safely between the three sites ensuring that lessons start promptly. Students understand the importance of healthy eating and lifestyles, but are critical of the college's efforts to promote these, particularly for

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those bringing packed lunches. They are astutely aware of different cultures, ethical and environmental issues and their impact on people across the world. Students are enthusiastic fund-raisers for home and overseas based charities. Positive displays of other cultures and diversity contribute to high quality experiences in the curriculum. The college is at the heart of the local community and students engage in numerous joint ventures. Students from a range of backgrounds are articulate and prepared well for their future economic well-being through a combination of satisfactory core skills combined with strong personal, work-based and enterprise skills.

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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is good, it is because expectations are high. Teachers make good use of their knowledge of students’ different starting points and prior learning and build on this through smart questions. For example, in one good geography lesson for Year 10, students made good progress because the resources used to illustrate trends in Chinese population growth were stimulating, the lesson was shaped well to challenge everyone and technology was used smartly to impart this information and maintain pace. Less effective lessons typically had some of the following features.

- Too much teacher talk between questions means students stop thinking for themselves and are happy for the teacher to do all the work.
- Teachers do not make enough use of information about students’ targets and current achievement when they plan the lesson. This means that the lesson

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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does not provide the right level of challenge; more-able students are not encouraged to aim higher and less-able students are confused by the ad-hoc nature of expectations.

- Teachers do not check on the learning of particular students or groups of students as the lesson proceeds to assess if they are keeping up or could be challenged to think more deeply.
- There is too little explanation of what good learning will look like and too little guidance to help the students carry out the tasks.

Students generally know their targets and understand how well they are doing. But even where teachers have a secure grasp of these, there is a tendency for them to be too broad and not referred to when work is marked.

The curriculum is regularly monitored to ensure it supports improvements in students' outcomes. The Year 7 curriculum is successfully supporting students' approaches to learning and cross-curricular skills. The specialism provides well-organised and well-led opportunities for learning and a wide range of experiences which contribute to students' well-being. Care, guidance and support are good. There is a special atmosphere around the college which generates a sense of students belonging to the community and being treated as equals. Systems to ensure students are kept safe are secure. Intensive support has helped many students with specific difficulties to make progress in their personal development and achieve in their academic work. There are good arrangements for transition, including specific settling-in programmes which students comment positively on. Strenuous efforts, involving other agencies, to reduce persistent absence over the last three years have brought significant improvement to students' attendance.

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?

Senior leaders and the governing body have high expectations for the college's improvement. Structured and systematic monitoring is in place to collect a wide range of information about the college's performance. Self-evaluation, accurate at senior leader level, is not fully secure at all levels. The most recent changes from heads of year to learning managers are not fully embedded, and the links between subject leaders and pastoral staff are not an established mechanism for monitoring

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and evaluating. High-performing departments are well monitored. While middle leaders are enthusiastic and committed, they lack the skills to be able to carry out their roles effectively, particularly in evaluating the data and monitoring the impact of teaching on learning.

Systems for safeguarding are thorough. Safeguarding policies and practices are monitored carefully by the governing body. Senior leaders are committed to ensuring that everyone is able to achieve well and they make good use of data collection to target support where it can be most effective and ensure all students benefit from the rich curriculum. There is a strong focus on narrowing the achievement gaps of different groups, which is beginning to show impact.

A range of effective partnerships is in place. These help the college to adjust courses available in the sixth form as well as pursue ambitious plans for the contribution the college makes to community cohesion through local and global partnerships.

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	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Improvements in the sixth form are being led well. Monitoring and evaluating the work of the sixth form have developed rapidly since the last inspection and leaders are adept at providing teachers and subject leaders with the strategies for further improvement. Sixth form provision is now good, although there has not been sufficient time for this good provision to make a consistent impact on students’ outcomes.

Outcomes for students are improving quickly. In keeping with the inclusive nature of the college, entry level criteria for students has been below average. Attainment is

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broadly average with some subjects performing particularly well, notably the arts. Year 13 students who took examinations this year made good progress during their time in the sixth form. Year 12 students’ performance is more variable year on year, and is broadly satisfactory.

The college leaders recognise that there is variability between the levels of achievement in different subjects, which is being tackled successfully with more demanding entry level requirements and better use of assessment data.

Teaching is good overall and includes good subject knowledge, good quality feedback that refers to success criteria, and strong encouragement for students to share their learning and understanding. The rigorous tracking of students’ achievements identifies weaknesses at an early stage, and students receive a good range of individual support and tuition to support their progress. Student retention is good. They have a strong affinity with their town, local schools and colleges and the wider communities through numerous contacts with businesses, and high levels of participation in artistic and cultural events.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

A typical proportion of parents and carers completed the inspection questionnaire. There were many positive responses, although quite a lot of parents and carers had some concerns about aspects of the college’s work. Most of these related to the quality of teaching, behaviour and the college’s communication with them. Inspection findings judged these aspects to be satisfactory. The quality of teaching is still variable, although it is improving. Behaviour is also improving, although students say that some lessons are disrupted by misbehaviour. Senior leaders recognise the need to strengthen their partnership work with parents and carers and are considering a range of changes in this area.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at King Edward VI 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 265 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1,876 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	108	41	130	49	17	6	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	103	39	150	57	7	3	1	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	96	36	136	51	22	8	4	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	83	31	137	52	26	10	5	2
The teaching is good at this school	59	22	164	62	21	8	4	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	58	22	150	57	45	17	5	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	20	156	59	38	14	2	1
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)	63	24	141	53	25	9	7	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	65	25	159	60	24	9	5	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	20	143	54	40	15	10	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	18	137	52	40	15	12	5
The school is led and managed effectively	57	22	142	54	27	10	12	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	91	34	123	46	32	12	5	2

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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



5 December 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of King Edward VI Community College, Totnes TQ9 5JX

Thank you for your help and taking the time to talk with each of us. I am writing to tell you about our main findings.

We judged your college to be satisfactory overall. A number of things have improved in the last two and a half years and we judged that teaching in particular is getting better. This is helping you get better examination results in some but not all subjects. Your attendance is rising. Behaviour is good in the college and poor behaviour is reducing due to better management systems. You tell us that although everyone 'looks out for each other' and you feel 'really safe', some students choose to misbehave in some lessons. We are aware that the student council is at an early stage in influencing development at the college, but we know that your governing body is well placed to respond to your views and concerns.

It is evident from our inspection that the most important thing for the college is to continue to improve the quality of teaching and in particular your learning in lessons, so we have asked the college leaders to ensure that all teachers:

- are clear about their expectations of what you should achieve during the lesson
- use good quality questions to help develop your ideas and challenge your thinking
- carefully check how much you are learning during the lesson.

The college is in a stronger position to maintain and continue its improvement. The principal and vice principals, along with the governing body, have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. The college leaders work well with the subject leaders and year group heads. The college leaders recognise that these staff require additional support and training so they are all able to make a full contribution to this improvement.

Yours sincerely
Jonathan Palk
Her Majesty's Inspector

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