

John Smeaton Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108063
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	377695
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2012
Lead inspector	Gina White HMI

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	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	968
Of which number on roll in the sixth form	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Naylor
Headteacher	John Daulby
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 45 lessons taught by 45 different teachers. Discussions were held with students about their work and meetings were held with staff, including leaders and managers, and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and took account of a range of evidence such as the work in students' books, safeguarding arrangements, tracking and assessment information and self-evaluation documents. They also analysed completed questionnaires received from 111 parents and carers and questionnaire responses from students and staff.

Information about the school

John Smeaton Community College is an average sized 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school, serving east Leeds. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is high and is over twice the national average. Most students are White British. The remaining numbers of students originate from a range of minority ethnic heritages with few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high. The school has a learning unit for students aged 11 to 19 with complex learning needs. The school meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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	4
Achievement of pupils	4
Quality of teaching	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	4

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.
- The school is not satisfactory because students underachieve in relation to their starting points. Attainment in the basic skills of English and mathematics remains well below national averages by the end of Key Stage 4 for most groups of students. The gap between the progress made by students in this school compared to similar students nationally remains stubbornly wide. The school’s latest projections indicate that there are insufficient signs of improvement in students’ achievement. Students’ progress in lessons is inconsistent both across and within subject areas.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate because weaknesses over time have resulted in students making inadequate progress. In the majority of lessons seen work is not matched well enough to the different needs and abilities of students. There are insufficient opportunities for students to develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Feedback to students and teachers’ marking varies in quality and students are not entirely sure what they need to do to secure good progress.
- Students’ behaviour is satisfactory overall. Most students respond positively to the school’s systems for rewards and managing behaviour. This contributes to the extent to which students say they feel safe. Students generally have positive attitudes to learning which are demonstrated in the recent improvements in attendance. However, learning is sometimes slowed by low level disruption in some lessons caused by a few students.

- The sixth form is inadequate. It offers a limited range of courses and students' progress at A and AS level is below that of their peers nationally. Recent changes to the leadership arrangements in the sixth form have recognised these shortcomings and put in place strategies to address them. However, it is too early to assess their impact.
- Leaders and managers have not acted swiftly enough to tackle the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection, particularly the need to improve attainment in English and mathematics. Teaching and students' progress are not monitored in sufficient depth to maintain an accurate view of the quality of teaching and its impact on students' learning and achievement. While the actions of school leaders have led to recent improvements in attendance and a reduction in exclusions, their efforts have been less effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of good or better teaching and learning throughout the school and in the sixth form in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment for all groups of students, especially in English and mathematics, by:
 - making sure that tasks are consistently and precisely matched to students' abilities
 - ensuring that every opportunity is taken to develop students' skills in numeracy and literacy across the school
 - ensuring that there are opportunities in lessons for students to take responsibility for their own learning and to develop skills to work independently and collaboratively
 - ensuring that the feedback provided to students is of a consistently high quality
 - making sure that behaviour in lessons is consistently good.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that lesson observations focus sharply on the progress of different groups of students
 - strengthening procedures used to check on the quality and impact of the school's work so that improvements are brought about swiftly and securely
 - ensuring that leaders and governors undertake frequent and thorough monitoring and evaluation of the impact that staff training and school policies are having on the outcomes for different groups of students
 - using the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to challenge, where necessary, aspects of the school's performance.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence shows that students' achievement is inadequate. Students' attainment on entry to the school is rising but remains below average in English and mathematics. The school's literacy programme, introduced following the last inspection in 2008, is having a positive impact on the progress of students at Key Stage 3, especially in reading. For example, in a Year 9 tutor group session, the weakest readers successfully applied strategies to decode words. They talked about some of the features of the main characters and showed a rapidly expanding vocabulary. While students make satisfactory progress overall by the end of Key Stage 3, their rate of progress varies considerably between different year groups. For example, for most groups of students, progress slows in English and mathematics in Year 8. As students move through the rest of the school the variability in rates of progress remains. This is because inconsistencies in teaching do not ensure that the gaps in students' knowledge and understanding are tackled quickly enough for them all to make sufficient progress.

A large majority of students leave school with five or more GCSE equivalent qualifications at higher grades. Even so, by the end of Key Stage 4, students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics is significantly below average. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make better progress in the school than their peers. However, some groups of students, such as those who are known to be eligible for free school meals, do not make as much progress as their peers. In addition, test results show that those students who are more able, and those who are less able in mathematics on entry to the school, failed to make expected progress in 2011. Few students continue into the sixth form. Retention rates are good and many choose to stay on to the second year of their courses, but the progress of many sixth form students is significantly below average.

Responses to the inspection questionnaires returned by parents and carers show they consider that their children are making satisfactory progress. This view is not supported by the inspectors who found that students do not make sufficient progress in developing their basic skills in English and mathematics.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is inadequate. Teachers' expectations of their students are generally not high enough and this results in work that is not sufficiently well matched to students' needs. The work in students' books shows that teaching over time has not been good enough, including in the sixth form.

Teachers' questioning varies in quality. Where it is good, students answer questions that require them to think carefully before responding. However, all too often, teachers' questioning in lessons does not challenge the more able, or check students' understanding and therefore teachers do not move students' learning on at a good enough pace. In the weaker lessons, teachers spend too long giving instructions and at times learning is disrupted by a few students who misbehave. Students are too

dependent on teachers' help and are not encouraged to solve problems themselves or collaboratively.

In some lessons, teachers successfully develop students' literacy and numeracy skills but this is not typical and there are too few opportunities to develop and extend students' basic skills. This is in sharp contrast to the very effective teaching that students receive in the learning support unit. Disabled students and those with special educational needs are fully engaged in their learning.

A minority of the teaching observed by inspectors was good. Where teaching was good, for example in a Year 7 history lesson about the Second World War, students were set tasks with a level of challenge appropriate to their abilities. This resulted in a good pace, students worked hard and successfully summarised events in their own words, comparing and contrasting the reasons for war. Lessons of this quality contribute well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

More generally, students are not always sure about what they need to do to secure good progress because they are often unclear about how well they are doing or what they need to do next to reach higher levels. Feedback and marking vary in quality and are inconsistent across the school and between subjects. Where marking and feedback are good, students understand precisely the next steps in learning. Procedures for setting homework in Key Stage 3 have recently improved due to the school's newly developed virtual learning environment. This is increasing students' access to learning resources and information and is stimulating their interest.

Inspection evidence does not support the views of students, parents and carers that teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour and safety of students are satisfactory overall. The school is aware that a very small group of students, at times, disrupts learning and staff are working to tackle this. Students are aware of the different forms that bullying can take. The majority of students, parents and carers believe that bullying is dealt with effectively and quickly. Students told inspectors that they feel safe in school.

The school's strategies to raise previously low levels of attendance have been successful. Consequently, attendance is now broadly in-line with the national average. Students' punctuality is improving strongly with just over 95% now arriving on time for the beginning of the school day. The number of exclusions has significantly reduced over time and across all year groups. Much of this is due to a range of strategies to improve behaviour across the school, including the implementation of discipline policies, good communication and staff presence on corridors. There is also a programme of escalating sanctions and rewards. Partnerships with the police contribute well to developing students' understanding of the risk and staying safe.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders, managers and the governing body have not secured essential improvements in the school since the time of the last inspection. Consequently, weak teaching has contributed to a decline in standards in English and mathematics and the inadequate achievement of students. Despite remedying some areas of weakness, such as attendance and punctuality, improvements in other important areas have been too slow and the school has not demonstrated that it has the capacity to sustain improvement.

Inspection evidence does not support the school's judgement that every aspect of the school's work is good. Monitoring is not robust enough to provide an accurate evaluation of students' progress and staff performance. Although the headteacher has a clear understanding of the challenges the school faces and the school's self-evaluation recognises the main strengths in provision, too little account is taken of significant weaknesses that are leading to students' underachievement. The impact teaching has on the progress of different groups of students is given too little attention in the school's evaluation of the quality of lessons. The school's monitoring of teaching has identified most of the areas of concern, including in the sixth form. Reviews of each department and the sixth form in the last 12 months found common issues across subjects. These related to the effectiveness with which work was matched to students' needs; the need to stimulate students' interest and engagement in learning; and inconsistencies in the development of students' literacy skills. However, leaders have not done enough to address these weaknesses and have not taken the decisive action needed or introduced effective remedies. This academic year the school has trained teachers across all subjects in order to develop students' literacy skills, but the take-up of training is not universal. Despite some good practice that is developing, this initiative has come too late to tackle the inconsistencies that have hindered some students' progress since the last inspection.

Opportunities for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development help students to experience a wide range of activities and contribute well to their enjoyment and social and cultural development. However, there has been insufficient progress in overcoming barriers to educational achievement for some groups of students. For example, students who are eligible for free school meals continue to achieve less well than most of their fellow students in the school.

The school is tackling incidents of discrimination effectively. Equality of opportunity is promoted by ensuring that all students are supported to participate in all areas of the curriculum. Decisions taken over the past year have tackled restrictions in the curriculum and widened opportunities for students to progress academically in science, and in modern foreign languages at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. However, the impact of these changes on students' aspirations, their take-up of these new opportunities and performance has yet to be realised. The curriculum for students with complex learning needs is broad and balanced and is well attuned to meet their specific needs.

While the governing body is supportive of the school and governors ask questions in response to information that is presented to them by senior leaders, members of the governing body have insufficient insight into important performance measures, particularly for the progress of different groups of students. Improvement plans are

focused around a narrow range of priorities but this has not ensured that progress has been made to tackle the areas for improvement from the last inspection. Success criteria are not clearly defined and this has not helped governors to exercise their responsibilities and robustly hold the school to account. Safeguarding arrangements in the school are effective.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.

14 May 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of John Smeaton Community College, Leeds, LS15 8TA

Thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection of your school. We have taken note of your views as well as those of your parents and carers who completed questionnaires. I am writing to share some of the findings with you.

Teaching is not sufficiently effective. Although there is some good and outstanding teaching in your school, there is not enough to ensure that you make the progress of which you are capable. We are concerned that the school's leaders and managers are not bringing about the necessary improvements quickly enough. However, we recognise the improvements that have been made to improve students' behaviour and attendance.

We have judged that your school requires 'special measures'. This means that the school will receive additional support to help it improve. Other inspectors will visit regularly to check on progress. Your school has been asked to increase the amount of good or better teaching and to accelerate your progress, especially in English and mathematics, by doing the following:

- making sure that the tasks you are given are better matched to your abilities and offer the right amount of challenge; that every opportunity is taken to develop your skills in numeracy and literacy across the school; and ensuring that you develop the skills needed to work independently and collaboratively
- ensuring that the feedback you receive is of consistently high quality so you know how best to improve your work and making sure that behaviour in lessons is good.

We have also asked leaders and managers at all levels in the school to strengthen the way in which they check the quality of teaching and learning; to challenge performance rigorously; and to check the impact of the school's work on outcomes for you all. We hope that you will play your part by continuing to attend regularly, behaving well and working hard. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector

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