

John O'Gaunt Community Technology College

Priory Road, Hungerford, Berkshire, RG17 0AN

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Boys' achievement, especially in English, is not as strong as that of the girls. Students' progress in English is not as fast as it should be. They do not always apply their literacy skills well enough in other subjects.
- Students' performance across GCSE courses varies considerably from subject to subject.
- Teaching is not yet good enough to ensure students achieve well in all subjects consistently. The quality of marking and the assessment of students' work varies across the school.
- The sixth form requires improvement because students do not achieve as they should at advanced supplementary level at the end of Year 12.
- School leaders, including the governing body, do not take effective enough action to promote good teaching and good achievement consistently across all subject areas.

The school has the following strengths

- The school cares for the students well and they feel safe. Strong professional relationships exist between staff and students.
- Students' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and a positive climate for learning exists.
- The quality of teaching is improving and in some areas students are making faster progress than previously.
- Students have good opportunities to take on responsibilities and leadership roles
- The staff, leadership team and governors are committed to driving forward with further improvements.
- The new headteacher provides a strong drive to move the school forward. She has made a clear evaluation of what needs to be done and has already taken steps to strengthen the way the school is managed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team visited 27 lessons, observing 25 teachers. Three lessons were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. The team also conducted a series of brief observations of learning in classrooms and around the school.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the governing body, and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's analysis of its own questionnaire.
- They observed the school's work, and looked at improvement plans, records and analyses of students' behaviour, the tracking of students' progress and examples of students' work. They looked at the school's attendance figures and monitoring information as well as safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Raymond Lau, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Jennifer Bray	Additional inspector
Andrew Baker	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized secondary school. Most students are from a White British background. The number of girls in the school is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, additional government funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, for children in the care of the local authority, and for those from service families, is in line with national figures.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is below average but for those at school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs it is average. Some students experience behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Alternative provision is provided for Key Stage 4 students on site.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012.
- The school is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
- In January 2012, the school was sampled as part of a national subject survey in science.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at consistently good or better, by:
 - providing activities that are well matched to students' previous attainment and that stretch their capabilities so they make good progress
 - consistently providing good quality written feedback when assessing students' work, so that they understand and can respond to the comments in order to improve their learning
 - developing students' literacy skills, particular in writing, across the school.
- Accelerate achievement to at least good by:
 - making careful checks on actions taken to ensure that boys' attainment is as good as it should be for their starting points across most subjects, but especially in English
 - increasing the proportion of students making good and better progress in English
 - ensuring that effective guidance and careful checks on progress enable Year 12 students to perform as well as they should .
- Strengthen the leadership of the school through:
 - developing the skills of subject leaders in using information on progress effectively and in consistently checking on the performance of their departments
 - ensuring senior leaders hold subject leaders more rigorously to account for the performance in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring all middle and senior leaders are fully involved in improving the performance of different groups of learners through more rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning
 - making sure the governing body holds the school to account for the performance of different groups of learners in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement is not good because in the last two years the achievement of students in English has been too variable. The proportion of students making the expected progress fluctuates considerably. Girls tend to make better progress than boys. This gap is beginning to narrow because of the current drive to improve teaching.
- There are differences in the performance of students at GCSE in various subjects. In 2012 students were mostly making good or better progress in subjects such as art, drama, French, music and BTEC science. Students did not progress well in English, German, geography, GCSE physical education and product design.
- Students' starting points are broadly average when they join the school although literacy skills are sometimes below average. Attainment is broadly average and the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE results, including English and mathematics, is gradually rising, despite the decline in 2011.
- Achievement in mathematics has continued to rise over the last few years and students make good progress. Mathematics results are considerably stronger than those of English with boys and girls both achieving well. Early GCSE entries have successfully supported efforts to raise attainment in mathematics and English literature.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs make progress at least in line with their peers. Students with more significant difficulties make good progress because of well-targeted intervention strategies and the support given by staff.
- Students eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to that of their classmates. Resources, including additional staffing and individual tuition, have been utilised to support their achievement, with greater success in mathematics than in English.
- The achievement of students in the sixth form requires improvement because their progress is too variable across and within subjects. Attainment in advanced supplementary examinations in Year 12 is below average. A number do not continue to Year 13. Attainment in art is exceptionally high.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet good but is improving. Over time, teaching has led to variable achievement across subjects. Teaching is consistently stronger in mathematics than in English. Teachers' planning does not always cater well enough for the differing needs of students which limits the progress made by different groups of learners.
- Assessment is of variable quality across the school, especially marking. The quality of oral feedback given in many lessons is good, however. There are some good examples of clear and helpful comments in marking that indicate what the students must do next in order to improve their learning. However, this practice is not universal across the school.
- Since September 2012, the school has focused on a whole-school approach to develop students' literacy skills. This initiative is in its early stages of development and does not yet include all departments. For example, in some students' books, poor spelling and grammar were not corrected. In Years 7 and 8, targeted literacy intervention programmes are beginning to make an impact on improving students' skills.
- There is an improving picture of teaching with an increasing proportion of good teaching. Nevertheless, these improvements have not yet resulted in improvements on students' achievement. The teaching sampled ranged from outstanding to that requiring improvement.
- The characteristics of good and better teaching observed included: high expectations and a good knowledge of students with lessons that include activities that meet their needs; strong relationships between teachers and students; the use of skilful questioning that requires

students to think; short and precise explanations which enable learning to proceed without wasting time; good opportunities for paired and group work; and the effective deployment of teaching assistants in supporting those who need additional help.

- Some lessons observed were judged to be outstanding. In addition to the good features outlined, these lessons included opportunities for groups of students to work together on tasks of varying levels of difficulty and activities directly related to students' interests which challenge them to make exceptional progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students are proud of the school and its 'small but friendly atmosphere'. They feel safe and attendance is good. Students are polite and courteous to staff, and to each other. They demonstrate good manners and communicate effectively. The new 'Immersion' curriculum enables Years 9 and 10 students to work more effectively together.
- In lessons, most students' behaviour is good. Teachers have created a good climate for learning. Students work well on activities and interact well with each other. They put effort into their work and their attitudes to learning are good. On some occasions, students demonstrate outstanding behaviour because they thrive on their learning and take responsibility for it. In these lessons, they support each other exceptionally well, but this is not the case in all lessons.
- In a very small number of lessons, students become distracted and readily go off task because work does not challenge them sufficiently well.
- In the past there has been a higher-than-usual number of exclusions. The school has clear behavioural and management systems which are now reducing this rate.
- Students are aware of different types of bullying and report that bullying is rare, and that when it occurs, it is dealt with promptly. They report that there is no discrimination between different genders, ethnicities or orientations.
- There are several opportunities for students to take on leadership roles within the school. For example, students in Year 11 and the sixth form read with younger students. Several opportunities exist for students to mentor and support others, and together with prefects, they help to create a calmer and more purposeful environment.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management have not secured consistently good achievement across all subjects over time, especially in English and in the sixth form, noticeably in Year 12. Actions currently in place are now bringing about improvements. More robust systems are in place to address underperformance in subjects and check on students' progress.
- Systems to manage teachers' performance provide support for underperforming departments and individuals although lessons observations are not sufficiently evaluative in relation to the quality of teaching seen and some are generous. There is insufficient emphasis on the impact of teaching on the learning and progress made by different groups of learners.
- The new headteacher has already made an impact in providing decisive and strong leadership in improving the quality of teaching, implementing robust systems and reviewing the school's work. The school has a mostly accurate view of its performance. The headteacher understands key strengths and weaknesses and has clearly identified actions for improvement with clear timescales and accountability. Some departmental self-evaluation still lacks sufficient rigour and does not focus on how well different groups of learners are doing.
- Target setting and the checks made on the school's work are increasingly more challenging. The analysis and use of data by leaders at all levels, in measuring the performance of different groups of learners, is developing successfully.

- The curriculum has recently been revised. The new, two-year Key Stage 3 course for Years 7 and 8 meets national requirements. The 'Immersion' curriculum which begins in Year 9 is beginning to more effectively meet the needs and interests of students. The enrichment programme strengthens the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
 - The parents and carers are very supportive of the school, and this is reflected by the completion of Ofsted's online questionnaire.
 - The local authority has provided helpful support to the school in developing teaching and learning and in aiding the school develop an accurate understanding of itself.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is supportive and conducts a range of activities to check on the quality of the school's work. This includes conducting lesson observations with leaders so that they know about the quality of teaching and about efforts to tackle any underperformance. They provide some challenge to the school. They understand performance management systems and about the link between salaries and the promotion of teachers. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, and this includes all safeguarding requirements. The governing body understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a handle on the budget. It does not fully hold the school to account for the performance of different groups of learners, at all key stages and across subjects, including that of those students eligible for the pupil premium.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	110050
Local authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	405268

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Croft
Headteacher	Sarah Brinkley
Date of previous school inspection	21–22 September 2010
Telephone number	01488 682400
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