

Horizon Community College

Dodworth Road, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 6PD

Inspection dates

8–9 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2	2
Leadership and management	Good	2	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well from their different starting points.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 in English in 2013 was above average and has improved rapidly in all year groups since the college opened.
- Teaching is good across the range of subjects so the vast majority of students are making good progress.
- Students' behaviour is good. They show respect for adults in the college and report that they feel safe and secure. Attendance rates are rising strongly.
- The governing body and senior leaders have established an ethos of high expectations in all aspects of the college's work. This has helped to secure important and continuing improvements to teaching and achievement.
- Students who attend the sensory resource provision achieve well.
- Strong partnerships with local business and community groups result in students successfully developing their entrepreneurial skills.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Data are not always used well to plan work for the needs of students with different abilities.
- The gap in performance between students supported by the pupil premium and their peers in mathematics has not closed fast enough, particularly in Key Stage 4.
- Progress in mathematics is not quite as good as in English because mathematical skills are not developed consistently across all subjects.
- The quality of feedback about students' written work varies too much from subject to subject.
- Some subject leaders do not do enough to monitor teaching and students' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 50 parts of lessons taught by 50 teachers. In parts of five lessons inspectors were joined by either the Principal or one of his four senior leaders. Inspectors held discussions with the Principal and senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and members of the governing body as well as the local authority School Improvement Adviser.
- There were informal discussions with students and formal meetings were held with four groups of students. Inspectors scrutinised a range of the student’s written work, data from assessments and other records that the college uses to measure improvements in students’ progress. They inspected documents relating to curriculum and safeguarding. They also looked closely at the college’s own evaluation of its work and its plans for further improvement.
- The responses of 47 staff to the inspection questionnaire were considered and inspectors also took into account 101 parents’ responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also considered emails or letters from five parents.

Inspection team

Timothy Gartside, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Fiona Burke-Jackson	Additional Inspector
David Halford	Additional Inspector
Helen Gaunt	Additional Inspector
Rebecca Lawton	Additional Inspector
Darren Stewart	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Horizon Community College is a much larger than average secondary college that caters for students aged 11 to 16.
- The college opened in September 2012 following an amalgamation of two secondary schools close to the centre of Barnsley.
- The proportion of students supported through school action is slightly higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion of students supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is close to that found nationally.
- The vast majority of students are of White British heritage and a small proportion of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly lower than that found nationally. This is additional funding for those students known to be eligible for free school meals and for students who are looked after by the local authority.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The college makes arrangements to enter some students early for GCSE English examinations but no students are entered early for GCSE examinations in mathematics.
- A small number of Year 10 students attend alternative provision at Barnsley, Sheffield Wednesday and Huddersfield Town football clubs and local providers of childcare.
- The college hosts the local authority sensory resource provision for students with hearing and visual impairments.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further, in order to raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers make the most effective use of data so that they plan tasks and activities to meet the needs of students of differing abilities
 - closing further the attainment gap between those supported by the pupil premium and their peers in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 4
 - making certain that all subjects give students sufficient opportunities to practise their number skills
 - making sure that marking informs students about how to improve the quality of their work.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' learning by ensuring that all subject leaders rigorously monitor teaching and students' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement in this college is good and the most rapid progress is made by students in English and at Key Stage 3.
- In mathematics, current data verified by inspectors show students make good progress from their starting points and are achieving broadly average standards. Although students make good progress in mathematics, their progress in English is even stronger. The college's current data, supported by inspection evidence, show they are currently on track to achieve above average standards in English.
- Progress in other subjects shows an equally positive picture. Evidence drawn from the college's current data shows students' achievement is equal to or exceeds the expectations for their age.
- The students who are entered early for English GCSE are carefully selected to ensure they are not disadvantaged. They gain extra time to focus on English literature examinations.
- The progress of those students supported by the pupil premium including those eligible for free school meals is good, although a gap remains in mathematics, particularly in Year 10, between their attainment and the attainment of their peers. In English the college data show that the gap has closed between 2013 and 2014 for Year 11 students from over one grade to just over half a grade. The college has recognised that in mathematics the gap, although closing is doing so less rapidly and has put strategies in place to address this. However, it is too early for these strategies to have had a discernable impact.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is good. They make progress, from their individual starting points, similar to or faster than similar students nationally because interventions are timely and appropriate across all year groups. Students with visual or hearing impairments in the sensory resource provision who are taught in mainstream classes make good progress because they are well supported by teaching assistants.
- In this new college the impact of change is seen in the rapid progress made by most students in Key Stage 3. This is because thorough tracking of students' achievement over time is used effectively to identify any potential underachievement and effective interventions are quickly put in place. For students struggling with their literacy or numeracy there are specific days when these students just focus on learning English and mathematics. The college uses Year 7 catch up and pupil premium funding well to support such interventions as well as breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The achievement of the most able students is good and they also benefit from specific interventions to stretch and challenge their thinking and to broaden their experiences.
- The small proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other students demonstrating the college's commitment to providing equality of opportunity.
- The achievement of the small number of students who attend alternative provision is carefully monitored by a member of the leadership team and they make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good with a small amount that is outstanding. A range of interesting activities are usually carefully planned and high expectations are set. For example, when geography was being taught in Year 10, students were very engaged when they were to model different patterns.
- Questioning techniques are often used skilfully to deepen students' thinking and enhance their ability to analyse and evaluate problems. For example, when students were learning about religious education in Year 10 their progress was outstanding because questions were asked that required the students to think deeply about current issues.
- Relationships between teachers and students are good. During the two inspection days teachers were welcoming their new classes for the next academic year and they established expectations

and set boundaries in a friendly yet firm manner.

- Teachers receive detailed information about teaching strategies from specialists in the sensory resource provision. This information is used well. This is combined with the good quality additional support students receive from teaching assistants and results in the students who attend the specialist provision making good progress when they are included in mainstream classes.
- Teachers promote literacy in their lessons by emphasising the meaning and spelling of key words specific to their subjects. In many subjects there were good examples of extended writing in pupils' books. However, numeracy is not given the same high priority.
- The quality of marking of students' work is effective only in some subjects. When marking is at its best suggestions are made for the next steps for improvement and students reflect upon the advice. However, in too many books marking lacks accuracy and advice to students is too general for students to apply and therefore improve their work.
- Occasionally, assessment information is not used effectively to inform the planning of activities so that the tasks do not meet the needs of students with a range of abilities. This slows learning for the most able and least able students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of students is good. Due to the location of the college on a busy main road different year groups arrive and leave the college at different times. They arrive promptly and are dressed smartly in their green blazers and year specific college ties. Supervision around the site at the start and end of the day and at break and lunchtime is good.
- The college occupies large, modern and attractive buildings and the students appreciate and respect these facilities. They move around the college calmly and wait patiently if the stairs are busy. Students queue in an orderly manner for the Horizon Café which provides a good range of healthy food and drink.
- There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions since the college opened its doors. The emphasis is upon inclusion and restorative justice. Students who break the rules are sent to a well-managed learning support centre until they are ready to return to their lessons. On a few occasions the college has worked cooperatively with other schools in the area to allow students a fresh start. The number of students referred to the learning support centre has declined steadily since 2012 showing that the management of behaviour has improved and the systems are working well.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure, including those in the sensory resource unit, is good. Students report that when bullying occurs they can report it to a member of staff and know that it will be taken seriously. Assemblies and lessons on homophobic-, racist- and cyber-bullying mean that students know that such behaviour is totally unacceptable.
- Attendance is improving rapidly and for this academic year is above the national average. This includes the attendance of those students who are eligible for the pupil premium. The college has in place rigorous systems for monitoring attendance and intervening swiftly, involving parents and outside agencies when there is the need. Students and parents are made very aware of the importance of regular attendance and a rewards system operates to encourage excellent attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels, including the governing body, have high ambitions for the college and high expectations for its students.
- The leadership of the experienced Principal is calm and assured and he is supported by a very effective senior leadership team. They share the vision of the Principal to not only widen the opportunities for the students but also for the college to play a central role within its community.

- Teaching and achievement are improving strongly as a result of the rigorous tackling of underperformance. This has included successful training of teaching and non-teaching staff and implementing a restructure of management roles. The restructure has strengthened the emphasis on developing the quality of teaching and has ensured that quality of teaching is monitored robustly. Leaders and managers have ensured that there is a very close relationship between performance and pay progression.
- Newly qualified and recently qualified teachers are well monitored and supported. Some very good practice was seen by those who are new or relatively new to teaching in the college.
- The college's own evaluation of its performance and its plans for further improvement are detailed, ambitious and realistic. The senior leadership team holds regular meetings to ensure it has an accurate view of the college's performance and to plan appropriate actions.
- Most middle leaders know their departments well, understand the expectations of senior leaders and track the progress of students well. They hold regular meetings to plan interventions for those students who fall behind their targets. Middle leaders have benefited from specific management training programmes and they encourage staff to participate in the many training programmes which take place at the college. However, staff reorganisation and other recent changes have meant that in some subjects leaders are new to their roles and have not yet done enough to monitor the quality of teaching or students' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- The leadership and management of provision for students with special educational needs and those with sensory impairment are good. Leaders have ensured that the progress of these students is closely monitored to make sure they reach their individual targets and this underpins their good achievement.
- The curriculum is well matched to the needs of the students. A few less popular subjects from the two predecessor schools are being phased out. Vocational subjects are offered when appropriate but academic subjects are the mainstay of the curriculum. There is good quality options and careers advice available for all students.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development feature highly in the life of the college. There are rich and varied opportunities for community work for which students achieve 'I know I can' awards. Community enterprise is given a high profile and recently a group of Year 8 students won for the college the accolade of 'Most enterprising school in the UK'.
- The college has benefited from the support of the local authority in the form of training and external evaluation of its performance. The local authority has confidence in the leadership of the college and is pleased with its impact upon both its students and the local community.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The building is well designed with safety in mind and there is regular training for all staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors played a central role in the amalgamation process that led to the creation of Horizon Community College and they are determined for it to succeed. Consequently, they robustly hold the Principal and his team to account and have a good grasp of the data on the college's performance. They are aware of the quality of teaching and have supported senior leaders when tackling underperformance. They use performance management effectively to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that there are strong links between outcomes for students and pay awards.
 - The governing body meets all statutory duties and reviews its policies regularly.
 - Governors track the progress of those students eligible for the pupil premium at their regular board meetings. They know where pupil premium money is spent and understand that the gaps in achievement are closing. They are aware that the gaps are closing faster in some areas than in others.

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	136404
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	430654

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	2,130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Bostwick
Headteacher	Nick Bowen
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2013
Telephone number	01226 704230
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