



Seaford Head Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114589
LEA East Sussex
Inspection number 283086
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Stephen Long HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Arundel Road
School category	Community		Seaford
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		BN25 4LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01323 891 623
Number on roll	1400	Fax number	01323 492576
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Robert Brandley
Date of previous inspection	10 November 1997	Headteacher	Mrs Lynton Golds

Age group 11 to 18	Inspection dates 7 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	Inspection number 283086
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Introduction

When Seaford Head Community College was inspected in January 2004 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its students an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools (HMI) subsequently visited the college on three occasions to monitor its progress and re-inspected it in December 2005.

Description of the school

Seaford Head Community College is a co-educational comprehensive serving the coastal town of Seaford. It is slightly larger than the average for schools of this type although student numbers have fallen in the last two years. The college has two separate sites, one for students up to Year 9 and one for those in Year 10 and above. The college undertakes collaborative work with a local college of further education and is a centre for adult education and youth services. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well below the national average as is the proportion for whom English is a second language. The number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is low. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is well below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is slightly higher than the average.

Since the last inspection there has been a high turnover of staff, including at senior level. Recently an acting principal has been leading the college. In October 2005 a permanent appointment was made. The acting principal has served alongside the permanent postholder for the final half of this term.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the college no longer requires special measures.

Seaford Head Community College views its performance as satisfactory overall and inspection evidence confirms this because the college's self-evaluation is secure and is used to underpin improvement. The college provides satisfactory value for money.

Good progress has been made over the last two terms to meet the targets set when the college was placed in special measures. This follows an initial period when progress was too slow. Since their appointments, the principal and the acting principal have, together with their colleagues, significantly enhanced the rate of improvement. There is good capacity for this to continue. Monitoring by senior staff accurately reveals what the college does well and where it could improve. Good use is made of this knowledge to plan overall developments although harnessing the work of each subject area so that the students do equally well across the curriculum requires more work.

The students make satisfactory progress overall reaching average standards by the time they leave. Standards are improving slowly but have further to go. There remains too much inconsistency in the amount of progress made by different groups of students. For example, the boys are generally outperformed by the girls.

Recent improvements in teaching mean it is now satisfactory and sometimes good. The majority of lessons are well planned, making appropriate use of assessment data to meet students' needs. Lessons are increasingly stimulating and behaviour is usually well managed. However, the purpose of some lessons is unclear to students and they are not always involved enough in assessing their own work. Marking does not routinely ensure that they know how to make improvements although most do know the overall targets towards which they are working. The students have access to a satisfactory curriculum overall with good work related and extracurricular activities.

The students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour have improved markedly and are now good. Students are well cared for. The majority attend well, enjoy learning and are supportive toward each other. As a result the college now has a positive ethos.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The college judges the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form to be satisfactory and inspection evidence confirms this. The students' achievement and standards are satisfactory overall and improving. Learning is supported by effective personal development and the care invested in students' well-being. Curriculum opportunities are reasonable and enhanced through collaborative work with a local college of further education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and sometimes good. The leadership and management of the sixth form have improved and are satisfactory, although the overall evaluation of provision lacks clarity. Students' progress is well monitored to identify and tackle underachievement and to set individual targets.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in the college, including in the sixth form
- increase further the proportion of good or better teaching
- improve the quality of marking and the consistent involvement of students in assessment
- develop the quality of subject leadership.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Attainment on entry to the college is broadly average. Students' achievements have fluctuated over recent years but are satisfactory by the end of Year 9. Results in the 2005 national tests showed improvements in English and science but a slight fall in mathematics. Overall, results for this age group are improving but not as fast as they are nationally. There is too much variation in the rates of progress made by different groups of students. For example, middle ability boys do less well than their peers whilst some groups, for instance students whose first language is not English, make better than expected progress.

By the end of Year 11 standards are broadly in line with national averages and in English and mathematics are slightly above average. The 2005 results show that overall achievement is improving slowly and far fewer students than is seen nationally leave the college without any qualifications. The proportions gaining at least 5 A*-G grades, and the proportions who gain English and mathematics among their 5 A*-C grades slightly exceed national averages and are rising. Progress during Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory but variations in the progress made in different subjects and by students of differing abilities are too great. Overall too few students reach the higher GCSE grades.

In the sixth form the students' overall attainment on entry is below the national average. Students make satisfactory progress so that, although individual students meet their targets, the standards achieved overall are below national averages when they leave. In 2005, results in AS and A level examinations continued a three year trend of improvement.

Students who have learning difficulties and disabilities achieve at least as well as others due to the good support and guidance they receive.

The college sets challenging targets for all students but these are not consistently met, reflecting the legacies of unsatisfactory teaching and behaviour in the past.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The students' personal development and well-being are good. The college is a happy and harmonious community where attendance is above the national average. The quality of relationships between students and staff is good. Most students feel valued, secure and that the staff have their best interests at heart. The majority are keen to learn although where teaching is weak interest wanes. Behaviour in lessons and around

the college is generally good. However, a small minority of students exhibit challenging behaviour which for the most part is well dealt with. Bullying is rare and students assert that it is tackled well.

Students willingly undertake responsibilities. Older students play a significant role in supporting younger ones through the prefect and student tutor system. They participate as members of the college council and individual year group councils. These have, amongst other things, helped to improve the quality of meals and provide plants to improve the college environment.

Provision for students' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Most work together amicably, abide by the college's rules and understand the difference between right and wrong. They enjoy raising funds for local and national charities and the recent Fun Run engendered a great sense of pride amongst the whole college community. Cultural awareness and development are raised by the college's good emphasis on musical performances, although the students' knowledge of a range of faiths and cultures is less well developed.

The students understand clearly the importance of healthy eating and exercise, for example through physical education (PE) lessons and elsewhere in the curriculum. The students' personal development, combined with their academic achievements, gives them a good range of skills to support their future careers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and sometimes good. The sharing of good practice between teachers is growing and contributing to recent improvements. The best lessons, for example some of those seen in English and PE, are characterised by the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and enjoyment. These features, combined with skilful organisation and well targeted questions, ensure a good pace and that students are challenged to think. Nearly all teachers write thoughtfully considered lesson plans. Most share learning objectives with students. However, some teachers start lessons by telling students what they will do but not why. In the majority of lessons teachers manage behaviour well.

The college produces succinct and straightforward data about individual students' progress. Many teachers interpret this well to plan lessons. Other teachers have yet to see the benefits of such analysis, and some lessons are hampered by work which does not appropriately challenge all students. When teachers link lessons to work that has gone before, and explore how topics relate to the world of work and life beyond college, students learn with interest. Students learn quickly where they are involved in the process of assessing their own work, although opportunities for them to do this in lessons are of variable quality.

Examining students' books reveals that they are not marked often enough, or with helpful detail. Many books contain gaps where students have not completed exercises.

Too often teachers' written comments are short, without any advice about how to improve, and students ignore them. Marking is better in the sixth form.

For students with learning difficulties and disabilities teachers and teaching assistants identify their needs sensitively and provide high quality support. Gifted and talented students are identified but they are not routinely provided with the stimulus they need.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory with several very good features. It meets national requirements and provides progression in students' learning. Nevertheless, there are also some areas of weakness, for example the underdeveloped use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum. For students who wish to follow vocational courses in Years 10 to 13 the college makes good arrangements with other providers to match their aspirations and needs. Students combine academic qualifications with off-site study and, when helpful, weekly work experience. Students in Years 10 and 11 can choose courses that reflect career opportunities in the local area.

The sixth form curriculum includes photography and media studies introduced recently in response to students' comments. The college is sensibly seeking to develop further the range of courses on offer in the sixth form. A large number of students learn musical instruments at the college. Extracurricular activities are wide ranging and well attended. Numerous sports, drama and music groups take place as well as revision and study support sessions. The college is always keen to develop unusual activities, for example cheerleading in Year 7!

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The college takes good care of its students and the staff know them well. Regular achievement meetings and an academic review day are highly valued by the students. As a result students mostly have a clear idea of how well they are doing in their work and understand the learning targets which are set for them. Good guidance is provided when students make choices regarding examination subjects to study or are considering their career options.

The wide range of the students' needs is addressed effectively. Vulnerable students, those at risk of underachievement and those with learning difficulties and disabilities, are well cared for. There are strong links with outside agencies who contribute to the care provided.

Systems for ensuring students' health and safety are effective. Child protection procedures are robust and regular risk assessments ensure the college is a safe environment. There is a good emphasis on students adopting a healthy lifestyle and issues concerning substance misuse and smoking feature prominently in the college's

personal and social education programme. There are good procedures in place for improving attendance further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with some areas of real strength notably within the now cohesive senior leadership team. The principal and the acting principal have collaborated effectively to provide clear vision and a drive for improvement. Management systems and college policies are strong ensuring that all staff share an understanding of what is expected and how they will be held to account. The responsibilities of the senior leadership team and the year leaders are now appropriately focused on students' learning.

Self-evaluation at whole college level uses performance data and lesson observations effectively to highlight strengths and weaknesses. This knowledge is increasingly well used to improve students' progress and to support development planning.

The quality of subject leadership varies widely but is satisfactory overall. The college rightly sees the development of uniformly strong subject leadership as crucial in making further progress. Some departments evaluate their work well and plan for improvement whilst others rely on support from senior staff, resulting in an inconsistent pace of development. The college has high expectations of all staff alongside a good programme of support from internal and local authority personnel to enable those expectations to be fulfilled.

The governors do a good job. They know the college well and are vigilant in holding it to account for its performance. There are effective systems for working with parents and the community. The college recognises the importance of developing these systems further, for example through giving parents internet access to their children's progress records. Increasingly positive feedback is being received from parents and others about the work of the college.

Appropriate use is made of resources and the college offers satisfactory value for money. However, some of the teaching accommodation, for example the temporary classrooms, are not conducive to learning and the students' access to ICT is limited. Corridor spaces on the lower college site are too cramped, hindering easy movement and doing little to foster good behaviour.

The college's leaders and managers demonstrate a good capacity for further improvement based on the progress made in the last two terms. They have markedly improved the students' attitudes and behaviour, resolutely tackled inadequate teaching, enhanced leadership and management, and built more positive relationships with the community and parents. Improvements in standards and achievement are more elusive but there is early evidence of improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Students Seaford Head Community College Arundel Road, Seaford East Sussex BN25 4LX

12 December 2005

Dear Students

This letter is to explain what we found during our recent inspection of your college. This inspection comes at the end of a series of termly visits by my colleagues and me. The comments below are based on observations of lessons, examination of some of your work, and talking to the staff and to some of you in formal meetings. We value your views and would like also to thank the large numbers of you who talked to us in lessons and around the college.

When the college was previously inspected, nearly two years ago, it was found not to be giving an acceptable quality of education in order to help you learn as much as possible and behave well. This has now changed and the college provides a satisfactory, and improving, quality of education. The staff have worked well together to make this happen and they want to go further.

Many more lessons are now of good quality. Most of you are given work which challenges you to do your best, and the majority of teachers are able to help and guide you in your learning. Behaviour at the college has really improved. Most of you behaved well in lessons and around the college. You were polite to us and showed pride in the college. There are a number of areas where you help each other, for example where older students act as mentors to help those in younger year groups. Those of you that we spoke to who do this kind of work were keen to take on such responsibilities. Most of you attend college well and say that you feel well cared for.

There are ways in which the college can now build on what has been achieved. The staff want to help each of you make the best possible progress and are working together to ensure that all lessons are interesting and worthwhile. You can also help. We would like you to work closely with your teachers to make sure you know exactly what you need to do in order to make progress in each subject. This means you 'taking charge' of your own learning, for example, by checking your own work and asking your teachers to explain the things you get wrong.

We have enjoyed being in your college. We hope that you enjoyed talking to us and showing us what you do. We have offered ways in which we believe you can help the college develop from here and we wish you every success.

Yours sincerely Stephen Long HMI