

Chessington Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102599
Local Authority	Kingston Upon Thames
Inspection number	308064
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Anne Wellham 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
Number on roll	
School	713
6th form	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Heidi Langrish
Headteacher	Mr David Kemp
Date of previous school inspection	9 February 2004
School address	Garrison Lane Chessington KT9 2JS
Telephone number	020 8974 1156
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Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Chessington Community College is a smaller than average, mixed, 11–18 secondary modern school in Kingston upon Thames where many schools select students on academic ability. Historically the college has always been undersubscribed although current applications are increasing for both the main college and the sixth form. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national average. A third of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and almost a quarter speak English as an additional language. A significant number of students join and leave the school throughout the year. Over the last 20 months, the college has faced many additional challenges, as a major programme to rebuild the school is underway. The college is housed in temporary classrooms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

'Chessington Community College has a very committed staff who believe in the children and want them to achieve'; this sums up the views of most parents. The college is a very caring and well-managed community where racial harmony and inclusion are strong features.

Most students enjoy their time in college and are particularly proud of the sporting opportunities that are available through the college's specialist sports status. Students are keen to take on responsibilities through supporting the work of the school council and taking part in active citizenship. Many students provide good service to their community through fundraising and their work in supporting primary school pupils. They are excited about the new opportunities that will be available when the building work is completed and are very positive about the benefits the new college will bring.

Students enter the college with levels of attainment well below the national average. A significant number of students also join the college at times other than the usual time of transfer. Many of these are at an early stage of learning English. Standards as shown by the results for 14 and 16 year olds in 2007 were well below the national average especially in English. Recently introduced support is beginning to raise standards of literacy across the school. During the last eighteen months, senior leaders have put in place a wide range of measures to improve academic performance. Changes to the leadership of key areas of the school have led to closer monitoring of student performance, more effective intervention strategies and improved communications with parents. Standards of current students are now satisfactory and improving.

Students know the expected standards of behaviour both in lessons and around the school and, for the most part, adhere to them. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is satisfactory overall and often good because of a new focus on immediate sanctions carried out by the senior leaders. The school deals with serious behaviour issues promptly and decisively. Low-level disruption occurs in a small minority of lessons mainly due to uninspiring teaching or poor behaviour management by teachers.

Relationships between teachers and students are good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and in most lessons, students get on well with their learning. The restructured senior leadership team has provided clear guidance on how to improve teaching and learning. Middle managers and teachers now have a clear focus on improvement through rigorous lesson observations and sharply focused monitoring. Students' achievement is improving rapidly in subjects where teachers give students clear feedback about their attainment levels and helpful guidance about what they need to do to improve. This is not, however, consistent across the school. The college has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The current curriculum is satisfactory but the options on offer, especially at Key Stage 4 do not match the range of abilities and interests of the students well. Curriculum plans for September 2008 are at an advanced stage and link closely to the facilities that will be available in the new college allowing for an expansion of vocational subjects.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form meets the needs of students well forming a small cohesive community within the college. Students have good opportunities to participate in residential trips, sporting activities and social events. Whilst in the sixth form students develop very positive attitudes

to study and become mature and responsible young adults. In the sixth form, pass rates at A Level are similar to the national average although the proportion of students gaining A and B grades remains below the national average. Students with English as an additional language with no formal GCSE qualifications achieve well. Over the last two years, there has been an improvement in students' progress and results in 2007 show that achievement is securely satisfactory. The curriculum provides a good range of academic courses and is expanding provision for vocational courses. The sixth formers receive good advice about career and education choices. This ensures that they pick those subjects, which prepares them well to go on to higher or further education or to enter the world of work. The college is very successful in encouraging students whose families did not traditionally experience higher education, to apply to university.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The sixth form team of tutors support students well. Students are aware of their target grades and regular academic reviews track their progress well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of all students.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning.
- Help students to develop a better understanding of what they need to do to improve their knowledge and skills in all subjects.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Standards at GCSE have fallen over the last two years and the results in 2007 were below national averages. Standards in national tests for 14 year olds also dropped in 2007. Some groups of students, notably White British boys and those students with higher levels of learning difficulties and disabilities did not achieve as well as they could. Students with English as an additional language achieved well and targets were exceeded in the college's specialist sports area. Students enter the college with levels of attainment that are below average. Approximately half of the students that took examinations in 2007 had not joined the school in Year 7 and for a fifth of those students, the college did not have any information about their attainment as 11 year olds. Current students are now making better progress as shown by evidence from mock examination results and school tracking data. The college has set appropriately challenging targets for performance this year and students are making satisfactory progress towards these. Provision for students needing support with literacy skills has until recently been weak. Clear action to improve this has improved progress but the legacy of weak literacy skills continues to impede the learning of a minority of students.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Students show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Punctuality and attendance have improved during this academic year because of effective strategies to raise attendance and tackle lateness. Behaviour around college and in most lessons is satisfactory and at times good. A minority of parents reported concerns about low-level disruption in lessons and inspectors found that disruption did occur in a few lessons where a teacher did not hold students' attention or did not set clear boundaries for acceptable behaviour. Students say that teachers take incidents of bullying seriously and deal with them quickly. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and students from diverse backgrounds relate well to one another. They are keen to get involved in the wider community through supporting the school council and fundraising.

Students understand the need for healthy living and choose from a wide range of healthy meals. Specialist sports college status allows the college to offer an excellent range of extra curricular sports activities, which are extremely popular with students and contribute in a variety of ways to promoting healthy lifestyles. The sports college has an inclusive approach and is successful at encouraging participation amongst students who have not felt confident using facilities in the past. The 'Chesslympics' is one example of an initiative that fosters positive attitudes to learning and participation across the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Recent monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and is leading to improvement. There have been significant staff changes in the learning support and English departments, which has improved student achievement from a poor to satisfactory level. Most teachers know their students well and plan work effectively to meet their differing needs and to set clear lesson objectives. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards, which motivate and engage students. Students' attitude to learning is mostly good and when behaviour management is effective, lessons proceed at a brisk pace with little interruptions. Good opportunities to work in pairs and groups help students to clarify thinking and learn from each other. When activities do not match the abilities of the students and do not interest them, behaviour deteriorates; they waste time and make poor progress. The effective use of assessment to judge students' progress and the quality of marking students' work varies considerably across subjects. Where it is effective students are told how well they are doing and comments are sharply focused on the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Currently the college offers a satisfactory range of traditional GCSE courses with a relatively small number of vocational options. The college makes the best of the limited opportunities

for work related learning at Key Stage 4. Support for literacy across the curriculum is now improving. Provision for citizenship and personal, social and health education has improved significantly since the previous inspection and now has a much higher status amongst students, staff and parents.

The poor quality of the schools original accommodation and the disruption caused by building work over the last 20 months has inhibited further development of the curriculum. Plans for September 2008 are at an advanced stage and the college is taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by the facilities in the new building. Students will have access to a wider range of vocational options including construction and hospitality and catering.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Inclusion has a very high priority in the college and the systems for support are strong. Child protection procedures are firmly in place with key staff receiving regular training. Appropriate risk assessments promote students' health and safety. Students in Year 7 settle quickly into the college and students in Years 9 and 11 receive good guidance on their next steps in education or employment. The college receives a disproportionate number of students who are at risk of permanent exclusion transferring from neighbouring local authorities. Despite the challenging nature of the problems experienced by this group of students, the Principal works tirelessly to engage the support of external agencies and to ensure that all students have a chance to leave the college with some relevant experience to equip them for the next stage of their life. There is now good support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with English as an additional language.

The college tracks the academic performance of students closely and older students are well aware of their target GCSE grades. Information on students' current grades quickly identifies students who require additional individual support or intervention programmes. However, teachers within and across subjects assess students' work and give feedback and guidance in a variety of ways. This means that students do not always have a precise enough understanding of exactly what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The principal is extremely committed to the college and has a very clear vision for future development. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They have made very effective use of the advice of the local authority and some experienced consultants to raise standards in English and literacy and provide more targeted support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The effective use of performance data by senior leaders to track students' progress allows them to set appropriately challenging targets.

Changes to leadership and management structures have allowed the principal to focus on his very effective management of the building programme. He is using the considerable strengths and abilities of his deputy, a seconded deputy from a local school and some strong middle

managers to move the college forward. One deputy has taken over the leadership of the English department and is providing a very clear direction for improvement. Rigorous systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are leading to improvements across the college. An effective programme of support for weaker teaching and the identification and sharing of good practice is tackling inconsistencies within and across subjects. Subject departments evaluate their performance but variations in how well they use assessment to promote learning leads to variable achievement in subjects across the curriculum.

The governing body has a good knowledge of the college and the wider community and a clear appreciation of the challenges the college faces. They visit regularly, are committed to the college and both challenge and support its work.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	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?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	
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?	3	2

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
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, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Chessington Community College, Chessington, KT9 2JS

Thank you all for welcoming us during our recent inspection of your college. Many of you took the time to talk with us and show us your work and we enjoyed visiting some of your lessons. We were impressed with how well you and your teachers are dealing with the ongoing disruption of the building programme. There is a lot going on in the college and many of you and your parents told us how much you value the activities offered, particularly the many clubs and the Chesslympics. The sixth form makes a good contribution to the college. The sixth form students are good role models, help around the college and show mature and sensible attitudes to their studies.

We think that your college provides you with a satisfactory standard of education, which is improving. The Principal, senior leaders and your teachers care for you well and are determined to make sure that everyone gets a fair chance to learn. You get on well together and bullying and racism are rare. Behaviour and attendance have improved and students are now making better progress because teaching and learning are getting better. Some of your teachers are very good and know how to make lessons interesting and keep everyone working. A few teachers need to improve their marking and assessment of your work. The senior leadership team are helping them to improve.

We have asked the college to do three things:

- help you to do better in all subjects
- improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning
- help you to have a better understanding of what you need to do to improve your work.

You can play your part by turning up to lessons on time, trying your hardest to listen and by completing all your work.

We wish you and your teachers the very best for an exciting future in your new college.

Yours sincerely

Anne Wellham HMI