

Bottisham Village College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110860
Local Authority	CAMBRIDGESHIRE LA
Inspection number	310444
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Middleton HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1040
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Lee OBE
Headteacher	Mrs Kate Evans
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Lode Road Bottisham Cambridge CB5 9DL
Telephone number	01223811250
Fax number	01223813123

Age group	11-16
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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

Bottisham Village College is a larger than average 11-16 community school serving a relatively affluent rural area to the north of Cambridge. The college was awarded specialist status for humanities in 2004.

Very few students are from ethnic minority groups or speak English as an additional language. The overall attainment of students is above average on entry. A small proportion of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but an above average proportion has a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bottisham Village College is a good school with many outstanding features. Students of all abilities and backgrounds enjoy a high quality of education and care, make good progress from the start and achieve standards well above national averages.

Perceptive leadership and judicious management by the Principal have enabled the college to build on previous success by broadening the curriculum and modernising teaching and learning. The impact of some outstanding teachers is an indication that the college is accurate in its evaluation that challenging targets to raise further students' achievements, standards and personal development, are attainable.

The needs, interests and aspirations of all students are central to the purpose and pace of improvement, borne out by recent changes to the curriculum. Opportunities for individual students to enjoy school and achieve well, through a wide range of vocational and academic qualifications and awards, show that 'Every Child Matters' is both policy and practice. Students contribute to the outstanding care, guidance and support through leadership roles and responsibilities across the college and wider community. Partnerships with external agencies include exemplary practice but some parents require clearer communication.

Teaching and its impact on learning is good overall, including a high proportion which is outstanding, characterised by confidence, pace and creativity, mirrored in the students' responses. In the best lessons teachers use questioning and assessment skilfully and analyse students' responses in order to modify their teaching. However, these remain inconsistent qualities of teaching. Behaviour management is good overall but not all students make a positive contribution to lessons.

The senior leadership team value, develop and deploy the individual skills of staff and students with a high level of vision, trust and responsibility. The management of resources and initiatives, including specialist status, helps to maximise their impact on improvement and innovation. Improvements in significant areas since the previous inspection include those areas identified for attention; students' attendance, use of data to track students' progress, and use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance teaching and learning.

Supported and challenged by an effective governing body, the college community shows outstanding capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by developing the use of questioning, assessment and evaluation of students' learning
- Develop more effective communication with parents

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. Students start at the college having achieved above average standards and continue to make good progress. In 2007, results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 indicated standards that are well above average. Despite some fluctuation in 2006 in relation to similar schools, unvalidated GCSE results for 2007 also indicate well above average standards, contributing to a rising trend in performance overall

since the previous inspection. A substantial number of students are successful in taking GCSEs early and achieve A/S and A level qualifications in Year 11. There are some variations in standards across subjects largely dependent on the quality of teaching and learning. In most subjects, boys do less well than girls but the gap between boys and girls is narrower than the national picture. The individual support that students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive in lessons contributes to their good progress in reaching targets.

A high proportion of students with wide ranging ability participate in extended school activities that lead to wider achievements in the arts and sports. Specialist Humanities College status has contributed to raising standards through enhanced provision and good collaboration between teachers and middle leaders to share strategies that accelerate the progress of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Many students demonstrate outstanding personal development and well-being but it is good overall because the behaviour of a small but significant minority nevertheless contrasts with the courteous, co-operative and considerate qualities that otherwise exist.

Attendance and punctuality to lessons has continually improved in recent years because of the rigorous procedures set up by the college and the development of a curriculum and teaching by which more students are motivated. Attendance is now above the national average for secondary schools. Good behaviour around the college and in the vast majority of lessons enables students to say they feel safe and secure. Students discuss moral issues with clarity and sensitivity and it is common for students to apply their understanding of right from wrong. Incidents of bullying and other forms of harassment are rare.

Students show excellent understanding of the factors contributing towards healthy living through their choice of healthy eating options and commitment to physical fitness. Inspirational teachers and role models attract a high proportion of students to extended school activities despite the challenges associated with living in a widespread rural community. Students' community conscience is evident in their support and fundraising for others and the cohesion between different groups of students in the college is good.

Opportunities to develop responsibility are taken seriously, for example by acting as 'buddies' and learning mentors or contributing to form and school council. The supportive relationships built between older and younger students are exemplary. The spiritual dimension of students' lives is evident in assemblies and lessons. However, the reflective qualities shown by most students, which encompass consideration for others, are missing when best behaviour slips.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good overall but outstanding teaching is evident across the curriculum. Teachers show good subject knowledge and in some subjects such as physical education, passion for the subject is reflected by the students. Outstanding teachers in key roles also contribute to the development of effective teaching strategies in others, for example in English. The work of the 'teaching and learning group' promotes good practice while developing the distinctive qualities of individual teachers and subjects through professional development. While some variation in quality remains, teachers and support staff are buoyant in their support of the

Principal's drive to focus teaching on the difference it makes for students. Self-evaluation at individual teacher level is good overall and is fundamental to further improvement.

Most lessons benefit from the excellent rapport between teachers and students and many from the sensitive contribution of learning support staff. Varied and interesting activities engage learners of all abilities. The best lessons challenge students through direct questioning that probes and extends students' understanding. In less effective lessons, too much is assumed and there is less involvement of individual learners for the benefit of the whole group. Behaviour management is generally good but low level disruption in a small but significant minority of lessons exists. Teachers' use of ICT and assessment has improved since the last inspection, but clear communication about how to improve is variable, particularly through marking.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A major review and revision of the curriculum has resulted in opportunities that match the full range of learners' aspirations and capabilities. Improved attendance and positive views expressed by students with wide ranging ability and interests support this judgement. Initiatives driven by specialist status and advanced skills teaching that have improved continuity between primary schools and the college and wide opportunities for accreditation and extended school provision all contribute to outstanding provision.

There is high quality provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities that enable them to grow in confidence and develop key skills that contribute to economic well being. Vocational opportunities provide a strong work related dimension. Good links with other local providers of education and training make the college well prepared for new 14-19 innovations developing nationally. Students with particular gifts and talents are well provided for by opportunities to take examinations early and pursue awards in sports leadership and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The college evaluates care, guidance and support as an outstanding area of provision and inspection evidence supports the view that this is a significant area of strength. A commitment to value, support and develop the potential of all students is consistent across the college. Procedures for child protection are understood and applied well. Effective measures are in place to deal with any incidents of bullying or racial harassment. The student support office and social inclusion centre have an excellent partnership with external agencies that enable the more vulnerable and challenging students to receive the individual guidance and support they require.

The college is working hard to provide a high level of academic monitoring focused on identifying and addressing underachievement, thus raising expectations and aspirations for all. Students are set challenging targets and most are clear about how to improve. Nevertheless, there are missed opportunities in form periods to consolidate this work. The procedures for helping students to transfer from primary school are very good, and the guidance that students receive throughout their time at school in relation to courses and careers is exemplary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The impact of leadership and management at all levels on improving equality of opportunity and achievement for different students, plus the significance of priorities tackled effectively since the previous inspection demonstrate outstanding leadership and management.

The Principal, staff and governors share a clear vision for the college and how the needs, interests and aspirations of all learners are fulfilled now and in the future. This has involved sensitive and skilled building on the previous success of the college. Improvements to the curriculum, teaching and learning have had a positive impact on attendance and achievement but challenging targets rightly set even higher aspirations for students. Across the college, staff are motivated and committed to continuous improvement and work collaboratively to share best practice but the college knows there is more to do to make outstanding teaching more widespread. Self-evaluation is accurate and well informed by systematic monitoring in college and extensive links with other providers of education and training. While rural in location, the outward-looking perspective of the college and confidence to innovate identifies it very clearly on the educational map. Specialist status contributes positively to energetic improvement through leadership by example.

The governing body challenges expectations at all levels but supports the college through expertise and insights that add significant value. The views of stakeholders are gathered and used to inform policy and practice but the college improvement plan acknowledges that this aspect of the college needs to develop further. The vast majority of students and their parents fully support the direction of the college, but a small but significant minority would value clearer communication. However, the senior leadership team rightly evaluate the improvements already made as an indication of outstanding capacity for further development.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

28 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Bottisham Village College, Bottisham, Cambridge, CB5 9DL

On behalf of the inspectors who visited Bottisham Village College on 26 and 27 September, I would like to thank you for welcoming us into school life. We enjoyed the opportunity to share your achievements and talk to you in discussion groups, lessons and during activities after school. Many of you made us feel very welcome by speaking to us politely and enthusiastically on our way to and from lessons.

We think that Bottisham Village College is a good school with many outstanding features and thought you might like to know why we think that.

What we particularly liked about your school.

- You get outstanding care, guidance and support and many of you contribute to it by taking responsibility for others.
- You have an excellent range of opportunities to pursue through different courses and activities that enable students with different abilities to achieve.
- Your school is very well led and managed at all levels and the right priorities are tackled because your enjoyment and achievement is paramount.
- Your teachers make learning interesting, relevant and challenging through good planning, questioning and use of resources including ICT.
- Your standards of work are good and rising because you make good progress from the start and know how to respond to the challenging targets given.
- You are polite, co-operative and develop mature relationships, though a small proportion of students could make a more positive contribution in lessons.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Ensure that the very best teaching continues to spread across the whole school.
- Ensure that your parents are clearly informed and involved.

The inspection team wish you well in contributing to and benefiting from the continued success of Bottisham Village College.

Ian Middleton

Her Majesty's Inspector