

# Liskeard School and Community College

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112061
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	310779
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Shield

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1104
6th form	267
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Felicity Holt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Donna Bryant
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Luxstowe Liskeard PL14 3EA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01579 342344
<b>Fax number</b>	01579 343350

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, including the sixth form, and investigated the following issues: that the progress of students is good throughout the school, including in Key Stage 4 in mathematics and science and for less able students; the impact of initiatives to improve consistency and secure improvements in mathematics and science; and that the school's curriculum, students' contribution to the community and their preparation for their future economic well-being are as outstanding as the school itself evaluates. Evidence was gathered from an analysis of national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, scrutiny of policies and other school documentation, observation of the school at work, interviews with teachers and students, and from parents' responses to a questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

Liskeard School and Community College serves the town of Liskeard and surrounding villages, and is larger than most comprehensive schools. Most students are from a White British background, with small numbers from other ethnic heritages. On entry in Year 7, the school loses some able students to grammar schools in the area and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has had engineering college status since 2004. In addition, the school has received several external awards to recognise its commitment to promoting sports, the arts, enterprise and work-related learning. The headteacher has been in post for less than one year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Liskeard School and Community College is a good school. It has some outstanding features. 'High quality learning for all' is the principle on which the school has built its ambition. The outstanding curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, is imaginatively planned to meet the diverse needs of its students. This is leading to increasingly well motivated students and improving standards. Innovation has been successfully driven by the school's specialist engineering status, and adopted wholeheartedly by subjects across the curriculum. Leadership and management have been invigorated by the impressive clarity and vision of the new headteacher. Students' enjoyment and good achievement are, in part, due to the thoughtfully planned curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, programmes are driven by a flexible and increasingly personal response to individual students' preferences and potential. An extensive range of vocational courses helps motivate those students who find academic study more demanding. Both engineering and construction are taught at the school's own off-site skills centres. Very good links with local employers, particularly engineering businesses, help ensure the curriculum remains vibrant and current. Community involvement is a real strength. All students in Years 7 and 8 study engineering, with a focus on creativity, problem-solving and innovation. In Years 8 and 9, enterprise courses for some students encourage their leadership and teamwork skills while taking opportunities to support the local community. Special events, such as Health Awareness and Enterprise days, enable students to devote time to explore particular issues in depth. An extensive programme of extracurricular activities and support for students beyond school hours in study sessions, revision classes and coursework support ensures students feel supported in their academic work. Above all, the consistent application of basic skills to the real world ensures students are motivated and engaged. This commitment to providing a relevant and meaningful curriculum related to the workplace, also means students are exceptionally well prepared for further study and future employment. Students attain broadly average standards and given their just below average attainment on entry this represents good achievement. Students get off to a good start in Years 7 to 9 and in 2007, their progress in English was exceptionally high. The rapid rate of progress tails off a little through the GCSE years, because performance across subjects is not consistent. In 2007, the proportion of students achieving five or more A\* - C grades at GCSE was below average. Whilst performance in design and technology, art, religious education, dance and in vocational courses was good, mathematics and science were relative weaknesses. Decisive and determined action to improve performance in both mathematics and science has resulted in current Year 11 students achieving well. The school is confident that it will meet its challenging targets set for GCSE performance this year. Whilst the proportion of students attaining A\* and A grades in 2007 was just above average, the progress of some lower ability students was less secure. However, this too has been successfully tackled through a combination of effective intervention and a supportive curriculum. Throughout the school, standards in design and technology are high, aided by strong partnerships with local schools and the community, particularly through its specialist engineering status. Students achieve well because of good teaching. Lessons are characterised by a purposeful and serious climate for learning. Most students are keen to do well and take pride in what they achieve. Teaching is confident and skilled. Clear instructions and explanations enable students to work confidently at tasks. Most lessons are planned carefully to ensure challenge for all abilities, and students know what they are aiming for. Questions are well used to probe and deepen understanding, and in the best teaching found, there is an insistence that students think more deeply. As one teacher insisted, 'use the word because, it will make your

answer more sophisticated'. Students say that they learn best when they are active participants and where their ideas and contributions are valued. Whilst much teaching is of a good quality, it is not consistently so in all subjects, and raising the quality of teaching to that of the best remains a challenge for the school. In particular, while students say they appreciate being told the 'next step' in their learning, assessment and feedback on progress are not consistently well used to plan challenging work or to ensure students know how to improve. Most students are sensible and take their work seriously. They show a mature and responsible concern for others. The school encourages this through the school's wellconsidered programmes for developing leadership skills. Students at all levels help with engineering outreach work, as sports and arts leaders running activities in partner primary schools, as peer mentors or supporting other students in the Active Learning Centre. High levels of participation in these programmes ensure that students' awareness of their responsibilities in the community is excellent. Similarly, the school's engineering status has encouraged a strong focus on developing its vocational provision, enterprise activities and work-related learning. Consequently, students' preparation for their economic well-being is outstanding. Most students behave well, although a small minority exhibit challenging behaviour at times. Parents and students comment that this can affect learning on rare occasions. However, students report that instances of bullying are taken seriously and tackled quickly and effectively. They feel safe in school, confident that they are well cared for. The system for personal tutoring offers continuity of support and guidance, which students appreciate. They acknowledge that they are well known by teachers in a positive climate of good relationships and mutual respect. Vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. Academic guidance is good, and students' progress is carefully tracked. The headteacher has introduced more rigorous monitoring and management systems, improved communication, and ensured a wider involvement of staff in school improvement through school improvement groups. Subject self-reviews contribute successfully to an accurate and balanced school self-evaluation. Robust action has secured improvements and is already showing an impact, with GCSE performance in mathematics on track to match that in other subjects this year. However, there is more to be done to ensure consistently good progress. Governors offer good support and challenge to the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and their views are regularly surveyed. The school looks forward with ambition, and has a good capacity to achieve its goals.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 2**

The sixth form builds successfully on the work of the main school. Students take a mature and responsible attitude to work and the school, and are good role models for the younger students. They enjoy good relationships with teachers and take a leading role in many of the activities in school. Students are confident learners and they respond well to the good teaching, which prompts them to be independent learners. Lessons typically challenge students to think and solve problems for themselves. While standards are broadly average, given the range of prior attainment on entry to the sixth form, students achieve well. They enjoy a wellplanned and wide-ranging curriculum with courses suited to their diverse needs. The school works well with a range of partners, including universities and businesses, to enhance its provision. The quality of academic and pastoral support and guidance is good, and students particularly value this aspect of sixth form life. The sixth form is well led and managed.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that progress through Years 10 and 11 is consistently good across all subjects.

- Use assessment and feedback in lessons to plan more consistently challenging work and inform the students how they can help themselves to improve.

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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	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?	2	2
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?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
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	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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	

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- 23 April 2008 Dear Students, Inspection of Liskeard School and Community College, Liskeard PL14 3EA Thank you very much for being so welcoming when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and were particularly impressed by the sensible and polite way in which you greeted us and the maturity you showed in answering our questions. It is clear that you enjoy being at the school and take part in everything it offers with energy and enthusiasm. Yours is a good school. It has some outstanding features. Here are some of the main findings from our report.
- You make good progress through the school because of good teaching, which makes things interesting and meaningful for you.
- Teachers give you a lot of support and take time to ensure you achieve your best.
- Many of you develop good personal and social skills and, with good opportunities to understand the world of work, you are exceptionally well prepared for your future beyond school.
- The sixth form offers you good opportunities to succeed.
- The curriculum is excellent and the school's status as an engineering college has given you lots of additional opportunities and challenges.
- The headteacher, her senior team and all other managers carry out their responsibilities very well. In order to make things even better, we have asked the school to do two things:
- Ensure you make good progress in all subjects at GCSE.
- Keep you informed of how well you are doing and use this information to plan suitable work for you and let you know what you need to do to get better. Thanks you once again for your help during our visit. Good luck with your work in the future! Yours sincerely Tony Shield  
Lead Inspector



23 April 2008

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Yours sincerely

Tony Shield  
Lead Inspector