

Horndean Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116437
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	312309
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Evans

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Ann Lotinga
Headteacher	Mr Glen Strong
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Barton Cross Horndean Waterlooville PO8 9PQ
Telephone number	02392 594325
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Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by five Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The college is much larger than average. The majority of students are White British. Numbers of ethnic minority students and of students who do not have English as their first language are well below average. The proportion of students eligible for free college meals is lower than that usually found. Nearly a fifth of students have learning needs or disabilities. The college has technology specialist status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Horndean is a good college with some outstanding features. Since the last inspection its specialist technology status has been used effectively to provide excellent curriculum opportunities for college students, other colleges and the local community. Additional funding has been used well to enhance provision and resources across the college. Well-resourced and imaginative use is made of electronic communication systems to enhance teaching and learning. For example, the use of podcasts enables teachers to provide support for students with activities such as homework and examination revision.

Most students enter the college with average attainment. By the end of Year 11 standards are above average and the overall trend is one of improvement. There has been some variation in the development of standards in Years 7 to 9 but most students currently are achieving well because staff rigorously monitor their progress once every six weeks and advise them on how to improve their work. The development of students' basic skills is excellent in English, particularly in their ability to communicate in a range of contexts. It is good in mathematics and science although in these and some other subjects there have been difficulties in recruiting specialist staff which has led to variations in standards between subjects. Students who enter the college with slightly lower standards than the majority or with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided with good support and guidance to ensure that barriers to learning are overcome. The GCSE results for 2007 were above national averages. Standards in English and design and technology were well above average. Standards in GCSE mathematics and science were not as high but the college has initiated additional strategies, including cross-departmental teaching, to support work in these two subjects. Current analysis of Year 11 work indicates a significant improvement in standards and good progress in these subjects.

Overall, an excellent curriculum and good teaching and learning have led to a rising trend in standards. Teaching varies from outstanding to satisfactory. The best teaching includes an imaginative range of learning activities to encourage students to think for themselves either in small groups or independently. Learning is enhanced further by the good relationships that exist between teachers and students, and between students and their peers. A small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons lack pace and do not motivate an enthusiasm for learning.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. Many eat healthily and take regular exercise. Students undertake a range of responsibilities in the college and volunteer for activities outside college. Attendance, attitudes to learning and behaviour are good generally but a few students on occasions disrupt the learning of others. There is a strong partnership between the college and other users on site which include, for example, breakfast clubs, sports clubs and a nursery. One parent wrote, 'I am very proud to have my children attending this college'. Students leave the college with good skills and qualities to enable them to succeed well in the next stage of their education or employment.

Students receive outstanding care, guidance and support. This is a direct result of consistently good leadership and management. Evaluation is well-established in the college. The strong leadership of the headteacher is at the heart of the college's good capacity to improve further. Governors and staff, with the support of the large majority of parents and students, are fully committed to raising achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve performance in curriculum areas where students do not achieve as well as in their high performing subjects.
- Ensure that the best teaching practice is shared between all teachers and subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and students achieve well. In the past three years there has been some variation in standards at the end of Key Stage 3 mainly due to fluctuations in English test results. Current Year 9 data shows that students are on track to achieve above average standards. Overall, the college met its challenging GCSE targets in 2007 and the average points score was above the national average. Subjects in which students performed better than expected at GCSE included English language and literature, design and technology, geography, history, German, physical education, religious education and statistics. Art and design and combined science double award were below average in 2007. An excellent assessment and tracking system is now enabling teachers to monitor and support students' progress more closely. Overall the progress being made by boys and girls is good. The quality of work is much improved because of many additional support strategies which have been introduced by leaders. These initiatives are raising standards and are having an impact on achievement but there remains some variation in standards between subjects. All groups of students, including higher attaining students and students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Most students enjoy college, are enthusiastic learners and in discussion many students stated that they particularly appreciated the wide range of learning opportunities on offer. Attendance is improving and currently is above average because of rigorous follow-up on first day absences. Behaviour is good; students' mature attitudes and amicable relationships make a significant contribution to the college's calm atmosphere. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with a particular strength in spiritual development. Students show a reflective response to a wide range of issues and topics. In geography students responded imaginatively to a lesson about the formation of waves by writing well-structured descriptive poems. They feel safe in college and adopt safe work practices. Students understand the features of a healthy lifestyle and most are enthusiastic about the good range of sporting activities on offer. The early morning exercise clubs are very well attended. Most show a good understanding of the benefits of a healthy diet. Students make a strong contribution to the college and its wider community. For example, senior citizens are very appreciative of the support of Year 10 students at their regular luncheons on the college site. The curriculum provides very good opportunities for students to develop their workplace skills and thereby contribute to their economic well-being. Effective teamwork skills are a feature of many of their activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and includes some outstanding teaching. For example in a technology lesson, students worked highly effectively in groups to review critically each other's design work. The lesson was carefully structured to provide a high level of challenge and the teacher had clearly established a culture of informed analysis and debate within the lessons to which the students fully responded. This high quality practice is not evident in all subjects. The college's highly effective assessment and tracking system provides teachers and students with a clear and current picture of students' achievement and progress. This enables most lessons to be planned well in order to provide students with sufficient challenge. In general, lessons are well structured and have clear objectives. Students confirm that most teachers use a variety of teaching methods and approaches to keep the lessons lively and interesting. In most lessons, behaviour is managed well. The college's innovative homework programme provides a good framework for developing students' independent learning skills. This is provided via the internet, therefore helpfully allowing parents to monitor the homework set and the timescales for completion.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. In the words of one parent, 'It offers something for everyone'. Since its accreditation as a technology college the curriculum has been successfully broadened to provide a range of opportunities for vocational education in Years 10 and 11. Ten successful BTEC and City and Guilds courses including, for example, construction and hairdressing courses in high quality purpose-built workshops, are offered to all students. Work related learning opportunities are extended further through good links with other local providers. Accelerated learning in English, mathematics and science are designed to meet the needs of higher attaining students from Year 7 onwards. Students on the accelerated learning programmes are able to take AS levels in some subjects in Year 11. Progression routes to post 16 courses in local colleges are popular and allow a wide range of choice. Large numbers of students enjoy the extensive extra curricular provision which includes sporting activities, drama, music ensembles and study support groups for many aspects of the curriculum. The visits programme enjoyed by the students is equally extensive and relates to many areas of the curriculum. For example, a group of GCSE Textiles students visited a link college in Italy and had the opportunity to study fashion design and manufacture.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Students feel well supported both personally and academically. Their view reflects how well the college works so closely with the wide range of outside agencies and the wider community in order to meet the full range of students' needs. A student echoed the response of many others with the comment that 'he could with confidence turn to adults and peer mentors in the college for help and support'. Year 7 students are very positive about how they were supported in making the transition to Horndean from primary school. Good measures are in place to challenge poor attendance. Data is used well to evaluate individual student's attainment and to set challenging targets. Students are very aware of their

academic targets and what they must do to improve their work. Their progress is regularly reviewed with their tutors. Arrangements for ensuring students' health and safety are well considered and secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The college is well led and managed by the head teacher and the senior leadership team. They are well supported by middle leaders who have a strong sense of common purpose. The headteacher's clear vision of success for the college and his commitment to realising it ensure that the college is focused on improvement. The college's detailed self-evaluation has identified the need to ensure that attainment in all subjects matches that of the best. In areas of relative weakness, such as in mathematics and science, action is being taken to bring about improvements. There are strong indications that performance in these subjects, especially at Key Stage 4, is improving. The school's 'Raising Achievement and Transforming Learning' strategy has successfully increased the proportion of students who gain five or more higher grades in GCSE examinations. The college has established very good links with its partners and the wider community. Governors have a very good understanding of the college and play an active part in college life. Financial management is good and resources, including staff, are used well. The college provides good value for money.

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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	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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	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
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

22 January 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of Horndean Technology College, Waterloo, PO8 9PQ

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your college and for the friendly way you received us. Our overall finding is that your college provides a good standard of education with some outstanding features.

Most of you told us that you enjoy coming to college and feel safe. The buildings and classroom facilities, especially now that Horndean College is a specialist technology college, are contributing to a good learning environment. We were impressed by the vocational courses offered and the strong partnerships the college has with local schools and colleges and with the wider community.

Things we also like about your college are:

- the care and support you are given to help you succeed in college and in later life
- the mature way and supportive way you contribute both to the college and to the wider community including, for example, senior citizens and nursery children who regularly visit the college campus.

We have asked your college, with your help, to make improvements and these are for:

- raising standards so that the quality of provision in all subjects is equally good
- senior and middle leaders to ensure that the best teaching methods are shared more widely across the college.

We feel the staff and governors have the skills to make your college even better in the future and we hope you will play your part in this. Thank you again for all your help in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Brian Evans

Lead Inspector