

Seaford Head Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114589
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	357578
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia Metham

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 of pupils on the school roll	1009
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Perks
Headteacher	Lynton Golds
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 33 lessons, observing 33 different teachers, and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and students. They evaluated students' attainment over three years, schemes of work, policies, the college improvement plan and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They considered 212 responses to the questionnaire sent to parents and carers, 150 responses to the students' questionnaire and 46 responses from teaching and support staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- Attainment and progress, particularly in English, science and mathematics.
- The achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The impact of the college's sports and science specialism.
- The contribution made by partnerships to the college's provision and students' experience.

Information about the school

Seaford Head Community College has two sites about half a mile apart, with all provision for Years 7 and 8 on the Steyne site and most provision for Years 9 to 11 on the Arundel site. The college gained specialist status for science and sport in 2007, with redesignation in June 2010. Having phased out sixth form provision, the college provides a sports and science programme for a small number of post-16 students as a franchise from a local further education college. Seaford Head participates in the Lewes Area Partnership Board and is the lead for the Sports Diploma. It offers extended provision in school and supports youth services through the Mercread Centre. Among awards gained by the college since 2007 are the Intermediate International Schools Award, Healthy Schools, Sportsmark, Study Support and the Eco-schools Silver Award.

Most students are of White British heritage, with few who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities ? predominantly behavioural, emotional and social development needs ? is also below the national average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

As the headteacher and members of the governing body explain with clarity and confidence, Seaford Head has been on a carefully mapped, five-year journey of improvement. The college has made outstanding and sustained progress and now provides a good education. Attainment targets have been met and often exceeded. A culture of rigorous and realistic self-evaluation and development has led to extremely productive improvements in teaching and learning and in the curriculum. Parents and carers appreciate this, as responses to the questionnaire emphasised; for example, 'The change is very positive ? a sense of urgency from staff and management and pride among the pupils'. The sports and science specialisms have been powerful drivers in this process, modelling best practice and developing an outstanding network of partnerships. Teachers and support staff who responded to the inspection questionnaire are exceptionally positive; they feel proud to be part of the college and are confident that they understand and contribute to what the college is trying to achieve. Capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

Enhancement of teaching and learning in Key Stage 4 has been a priority, particularly in Year 11. A broad and inclusive curriculum offers alternative pathways to those not best suited to the mainstream provision while also extending opportunities to follow options such as triple science and modern foreign languages. The proportion gaining five or more GCSE subjects at grade C and above, with English and mathematics, has improved steadily, rising above the national average in 2009. Provisional results for 2010 indicate further improvement. While there is rising attainment in Years 7 and 8, this is not as marked. Students are keen to do well but many find it more difficult to develop their thoughts in writing than in discussion.

Most teaching combines well-informed enthusiasm, confident professional skills, effective behaviour management and a range of assessment techniques to consolidate students' learning. In four fifths of the lessons seen, teaching was good or better. A few lessons were less effective largely because best use was not made of information about students' current standards and progress. Here teachers did not consistently match the pace and variety of activity to students' individual strengths and learning styles. Expectations did not always challenge the most able and opportunities were missed to promote independent learning. Whilst much constructive marking of written work was seen, teachers did not always balance encouragement with specific guidance on how to improve.

Students are extremely well informed about health issues and take full advantage of sports-based activities. All groups contribute with impressive commitment to the college

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and the wider community; for example, helping primary pupils prepare for transition and successfully standing for election as Young Mayor and Young Deputy Mayor of Seaford. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, demonstrated through the respect with which they treat others, the passion with which they discuss social and ethical questions and the enthusiasm with which they participate in the arts. Improving attendance and falling exclusion rates support students' insistence that they feel extremely safe and are proud of the college.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further, particularly in Years 7 and 8, by:
 - focusing on the development of literacy skills across the curriculum for those years.
- Strengthen and embed the way assessment is used to enhance learning, by:
 - ensuring that lesson planning and classroom management consistently respond to differences in students' learning styles and capabilities so that all individual needs are fully supported
 - presenting all students, including the most able, with challenging and regularly updated targets
 - ensuring that all marking gives clear guidance on how to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Analysis of the current Year 11's attainment and progress suggests that the upward trend will be extended in 2011. Most students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better progress than similar students nationally, and compare well with other groups in the college. Provisional results for 2010 indicate that students' average points score at GCSE was significantly better than the national figure, which represents good progress. Relative attainment is stronger in Key Stage 4 than in the younger years, reflecting the impact of well-targeted interventions for students on grade boundaries. The college has correctly identified the need to increase the proportion of A* and A grades but achievement overall is good, reflecting strong progress, improving attainment and positive attitudes to learning. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, has risen steadily since 2007, and was above the national average in 2009.

Students are emphatic that they are happy at Seaford Head. Behaviour seen around the college and in almost all lessons was good. Students understand extremely well what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most participate in sports activities. The student council and sports council are well respected and influential. Students in all years respond with energy and commitment to opportunities to take on responsibility within the college and the wider community, for example as community gardeners, junior sports leaders, mentors to primary pupils and fund-raisers for charity. Through such

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activities, work-related learning and the development of interpersonal skills, students are well prepared for life beyond school, although writing skills are not strongly developed across all subjects. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching was good or better in the majority of lessons seen. Recent training has focused on assessment to support learning. Teachers have an accurate picture of students' levels and are determined to raise attainment. Their subject knowledge is secure and they develop a very positive rapport with students, based on mutual respect. The range of assessment techniques and the use of information about current attainment and progress do not, however, consistently respond to students' differing abilities and learning styles. Students, especially the most able, are not always aware of what is expected of them.

The broad and balanced curriculum supports students' abilities and aspirations. Condensing Key Stage 3 into two years has increased choice and flexibility of provision

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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in Key Stage 4. Systematic analysis of attainment and progress informs setting by ability in core subjects. Greatly strengthened by the science and sports specialisms, the curriculum offers positive choice through a variety of pathways, extended through links with local colleges and businesses. Each pathway equips students with appropriate knowledge and skills for the next stage in their learning or employment. The curriculum is well extended through an enterprising programme of regular activities, visits, special events and international links.

Timely and appropriate links with external agencies complement academic and pastoral care, guidance and support. Vulnerable students are closely monitored and interventions are prompt and effective when signs of disaffection or distress are observed.

Communication with families is generally well managed. Great care is taken over transition from one phase to the next, especially from primary schools into the college ? a parent described the process as 'faultless'.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders and middle managers share an ambitious vision, supported by well-applied analysis of information about attainment and progress, rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and an enterprising approach to curriculum development. Good planning and implementation ensure that attainment continues to rise for all students, whether following an academic or work-based pathway. The governing body has a clear strategic vision and, through appropriate training and engagement with the college, effectively hold it to account. They recognise that communication with parents and carers is not always effective despite efforts to promote consultation. Financial management is curriculum-driven and disciplined. Enterprising leadership and management have made specialist status a positive agent for change and enhanced the college's standing. The development of partnerships has been outstanding, strengthening provision and extending opportunities for the college to make a valuable contribution to its local community.

The college regularly reviews its equalities and community cohesion policies and audits their impact. The college is committed to and effective in ensuring equality of opportunity, respecting differences and tackling discrimination. Complementing the strong sense of community within the school, partnerships and involvement in neighbourhood activities help students build up a strong relationship with their local

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community. International strands in the curriculum and links with continental Europe, Africa, China and Russia promote students' awareness of global diversity. Their first-hand experience of multicultural Britain is less well developed.

The safety and well-being of students and staff underpin all planning. Risk assessments are rigorous. Excellent safeguarding procedures are in place and well understood at all levels as a result of good training. The impact of the college's approach is reflected in the confidence of parents and carers that their children are safe and in students' sense of security.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Of those, almost all expressed confidence in the leadership and management, judged teaching to be good and were happy with their child's experience. A very small number expressed concerns about bullying and about disruptive behaviour in lessons. A few commented on the change in uniform, with mixed views.

Inspection evidence supported the majority view about the effectiveness of leadership and management, the impact of teaching and the enthusiasm of students. Behaviour observed in almost all lessons and around the two college sites was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seaford Head Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 212 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 2009 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	32	127	60	13	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	70	33	132	62	5	2	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	28	123	58	12	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	19	132	62	17	8	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	40	19	142	67	7	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	15	134	63	30	14	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	13	131	62	31	15	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	50	24	128	60	11	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	19	139	66	16	8	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	20	125	59	15	7	7	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	14	121	57	22	10	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	21	131	62	14	7	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	34	114	54	12	6	2	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Seaford Head Community College, Seaford, BN25 4LX

Thank you for the cheerful courtesy with which you helped our inspection team to build up a fair and positive picture of Seaford Head. We share your belief that the college is well led and managed and provides you with a good quality of education.

We were pleased to hear that you are proud of the college and that you feel safe and strongly supported. Your recognition that everyone deserves respect and the chance to do well makes the college a welcoming and civilised place. It was very encouraging to see how well you understand the need to keep healthy. Teaching and learning have clearly improved since the last inspection, which is reflected in steadily improving GCSE results. We were impressed by your teachers' subject knowledge and the good working relationship they have with you. Changes in the curriculum, including partnerships with local colleges and businesses, have provided you with wider choices to reflect your variety of interests, skills and ambitions. The impact of the science and sports specialisms has been particularly impressive.

To ensure that the college continues to go from strength to strength, we have asked your headteacher to ensure that:

- attainment and progress in Years 7 and 8 improve as strongly as they have in Key Stage 4, with a particular focus on developing your writing skills across the curriculum
- teachers' planning and approaches in class always take account of differences in your styles of learning and your individual needs so that all of you, including those who find work relatively easy, are really challenged
- the way in which your progress is assessed, both in lessons and in the marking of your written work, always gives you clear guidance on how to improve.

You can help by having high expectations for yourself and taking full advantage of opportunities to show initiative as learners.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham Her Majesty's Inspector

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