

The Hurst Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116422
Local Authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	338814
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Daniel Burton

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1006
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Norman Godfrey
Headteacher	Malcolm Christian
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2007
School address	Brimpton Road Tadley RG26 5NL
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Age group	11–16
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
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**Number of children on roll in the registered
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

Age group	11–16
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 40 lessons and 38 teachers and held meetings with students, staff and governors. They observed the school's work and looked at policies, data and analyses, including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governors' meetings and 264 questionnaires completed by parents and carers. They also looked at questionnaires completed by students and staff.

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

- the impact of the curriculum on the achievement of less able students
- progress in mathematics and in science by the end of Key Stage 4
- the accuracy of monitoring and evaluation of the progress of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of teachers' use of assessment to ensure lessons provide good support and challenge for different groups of learners.

Information about the school

The Hurst Community College is a school of average size and a specialist science college. Most students are of White British heritage, although there are a small number of students from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The range of needs includes moderate learning difficulties, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, additional needs with regard to speech, language and communication, autistic spectrum disorder and behavioural, social and emotional needs.

The school is a fully extended school, providing a wide range of pre-school and adult services managed by the governing body. This includes Miss Polly's Kindergarten, which is registered to provide day care for children from birth to five. This provision was inspected separately on 3 March 2010, and the inspection report is available on Ofsted's website.

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

2

Main findings

The Hurst Community College has improved significantly since the last inspection and now provides a good quality of education. Leaders and managers have built on the school's previous strengths, while rightly focusing attention on driving up students' achievement to be much more closely aligned to their good personal development. As a result, the large majority of pupils are now making good progress in their learning, and attainment is on a clear trajectory of improvement. A number of factors have contributed to the school's improvements.

- Provision for vocational learning at Key Stage 4 has been transformed, and students can now choose from a wide range of courses that better reflect their interests and aspirations. The impact of these changes can already be seen in the good, and sometimes outstanding, progress Year 11 students have made on these courses, especially those with lower levels of prior attainment.
- Effective leadership and management have helped drive up the quality of teaching. While there remains variability in the use made of assessment to promote learning in lessons, more robust monitoring has ensured that teachers consistently implement the school's agreed teaching and learning protocols and this has helped to eradicate inadequate teaching.
- The school has very effectively addressed the weaknesses in science identified in the previous inspection report. As a result, standards in science have risen from below to significantly above average and expertise in science is being used to help raise achievement in mathematics.
- Pastoral care is outstanding and the school's work to support students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable is exemplary. Recently-revised tutoring arrangements are already having a clear impact in improving outcomes for all groups of learners.

Accurate self-evaluation has enabled leaders and managers to address previous weaknesses and ensure clear improvements to teaching and the curriculum. As a result, the school has good capacity for further sustained improvement. The headteacher and his team know that there is more work to be done to secure recent improvements.

- There is some excellent practice in the use of assessment, particularly in English, science and modern foreign languages, but in some lessons students are expected to do the same work regardless of their differing needs or abilities. This can result in insufficient challenge for some and a lack of appropriate support for others. Not all teachers are equally effective in devising strategies to assess the impact of provision on the progress made by different groups.

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- In a small minority of lessons, opportunities are missed to engage all learners, for example through paired and group work and through peer review. In these lessons, students become too passive.
- The use of increasingly challenging whole-school targets has contributed to students' good achievement, but not all subject leaders are setting sufficiently ambitious targets.
- Although there is some very good practice to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, monitoring of academic progress across the curriculum is not sharp enough. This hinders the ability of leaders and managers to accurately measure the effectiveness of provision in removing specific barriers to learning, and make necessary modifications.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and the use of assessment so that the very best practice is seen in all lessons by:
 - ensuring that all teachers plan to fully meet students' differing needs, providing high levels of support and challenge for all
 - sharpening teachers' skills in implementing strategies to assess the progress made by different groups of learners in each lesson
 - improving the skills of all teachers in promoting consistently high levels of enjoyment and engagement in lessons for all students.
- Ensure that all leaders and managers set the most challenging targets to promote good and better achievement for students in all subjects.
- Sharpen systems to evaluate academic outcomes for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that all aspects of provision are equally effective in removing specific barriers to learning.

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

Students clearly enjoy coming to school. They value the good relationships with their teachers, and appreciate their teachers' willingness to help them in lessons and after school if ever they need additional support. Students from a wide range of groups reported that they feel very safe in school. They said that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and very effectively. All students, and particularly those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, are very confident that the school's pupil support workers and other adults will always help them to resolve personal difficulties. Revised tutoring arrangements have helped to increase younger students' sense of well-being by bringing students of different ages together, and have helped students to make a positive contribution to the school community through, for example, increased mentoring opportunities.

Students have a very good understanding of the dangers of drugs and know how to lead healthy lifestyles. Although the school's timetabling arrangements do not yet provide opportunities for students to participate in high quality sport for the recommended two hours per week, high numbers participate in sporting competitions through the house

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system. The school is proactive in ensuring that students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and students facing challenging personal circumstances are fully involved in extra-curricular sports and other activities.

Students work well in lessons and their good personal development makes a strong contribution to the good progress they make. Inspectors saw overwhelmingly good and outstanding behaviour in lessons, although some students reported that a small minority of lessons are interrupted by low-level disruption. Students thrive in lessons when activities are challenging and varied. They enjoy tasks which ensure that all can be fully involved in the learning. Excellent examples of this are seen in English, where students are given specific roles and responsibilities in lessons which are carefully tailored to build on students' individual subject-specific targets. Such strategies in these and other lessons are having a very evident impact in raising and accelerating achievement and promoting enjoyment. As a result, in the majority of lessons, all groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress and when teaching is best, progress is outstanding.

Most students know their subject specific targets and how they can improve. Although, day-to-day marking is not always effective in helping some less able students improve their basic skills and, in some lessons, individual targets are not reviewed regularly enough. In a few less successful lessons, the most able students are not challenged enough and the needs of some students with learning difficulties are not sufficiently well planned for. This results in some learners making only satisfactory progress.

High-quality teaching is ensuring that students make good progress in English. Initiatives such as single-sex groups in Year 10 are proving to be effective in raising the achievement of less able students. More effective interventions to address underachievement in mathematics ensure that all students now make at least satisfactory progress. Validated test results from modular examinations demonstrate that increasing numbers of students are now making good progress.

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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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their excellent subject knowledge in many lessons to stimulate students' interest in the topics studied and ensure that all are fully engaged. In some of the very best lessons, students are encouraged to speculate and take risks, working together to find the best solutions to complex problems. Good examples of this were seen in Year 7 science, where students responded with great enthusiasm and commitment when asked to devise and test their own approaches to a scientific investigation. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, students made excellent progress because the teaching was challenging, inspiring and carefully tailored to students' individual targets, so that all students were able to quickly apply newly acquired skills to an increasingly complex set of problems. School leaders know that not all teachers are yet equally effective in using assessment information to help secure consistently good and better progress in every lesson. Similarly, while many teachers make excellent use of support staff to maximise the achievement of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in some lessons teaching assistants are less effective because their precise role in accelerating students' learning has not been identified clearly enough in the lesson plan.

The increasingly personalised curriculum has played a very significant role in enhancing the life chances of students who find more traditional courses less enjoyable and accessible. Students are now able to choose from a wider range of BTEC qualifications than before, including in engineering, photography and health and social care. These and

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other courses have had a very clear impact in improving their motivation, achievement and self-esteem. Modifications to the curriculum in science and physical education have proved to be extremely successful in securing good achievement. Improvements to mathematics provision, including increased teaching time and the recruitment of a higher level teaching assistant, and strategies to share good practice with English are combining to drive up the achievement of lower and average ability students. The curriculum is tailored well for students with special educational needs through very effective one-to-one tuition programmes and other strategies to promote basic skills, for example through the European Studies course. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of local, national and overseas trips and visits and good provision for extra-curricular activities, with particularly strengths in art and music.

Excellent systems to care for the most vulnerable students are having a clear impact in promoting the well-being and achievement of students in most need of support. For example, relentless work to reduce the numbers of persistent absentees has been markedly successful. Very good links with external agencies are used to ensure that students facing challenging personal circumstances can make the most of the opportunities offered by the school. Some of this work extends to helping students and their families in resolving difficulties at home. The school works well to support students who exhibit challenging behaviour and the proportion subject to fixed-term exclusions reduces as students move up the school.

Excellent links with primary schools ensure that specialist provision quickly and effectively meets the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who value highly the support they receive from the learning support department. One, summing up the views of others, said, 'We couldn't do without them.' While the school closely monitors the impact of specialist one-to-one tuition, tracking of their progress is not yet sufficiently refined to enable the school to evaluate the impact of provision in lessons across the curriculum and adjust support accordingly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher and his team have a clear vision for the school and their determination to raise students' achievement is shared by all staff. The school has been proactive in seeking external support through, for example, the Gaining Ground initiative. Regular professional development activities improve teachers' skills, although systems to evaluate the impact of these initiatives are not sufficiently rigorous. Students are increasingly involved in evaluating the quality of teaching and their views are beginning to be used to

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inform classroom practice. Middle leaders have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and exercise their duties well, although a small proportion does not use data to set sufficiently ambitious targets for achievement.

The very experienced Chair of the Governing Body and fellow governors know the school well and provide a good blend of challenge and support. The school's work to promote community cohesion is felt strongly within the school community and has been enhanced further through mixed-age tutoring. Work to promote cohesion within the local community is also strong and supported by specialist status in science. Family learning programmes and other provision for extended services are helping to improve the school's engagement with some parents whose circumstances make them harder to reach. Links are being forged with an inner-city school to increase students' understanding of diversity within the national community. The school works effectively to promote equality of opportunity and tackle diversity, for example through very close liaison with post-16 providers to ensure that the needs of students with special education needs and/or disabilities are well met when they leave school. The school monitors the achievement of students from minority ethnic groups and those entitled to free school meals very closely to ensure that students achieve equally well, regardless of their background. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and the work to safeguard the most vulnerable students is exemplary.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

The very large majority of parents and carers who completed the Ofsted questionnaires are very supportive of the school and the quality of education it provides. A number made very positive comments about the quality of teaching at the school and the good progress their children are making, and are also extremely supportive of the school's leadership and management arrangements. A small minority do not think the school is effective enough in

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helping their children to lead healthy lifestyles. A few concerns regarding the effectiveness of other aspects of provision were also raised, but no patterns emerged from the comments made. Four parents raised concerns about particular incidents with regard to safeguarding. Inspectors investigated the school's safeguarding arrangements very thoroughly and found safeguarding arrangements to be good, with some exemplary practice.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Hurst 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 264 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1006 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	20	193	73	14	5	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	64	24	183	69	13	5	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	71	27	172	65	17	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	23	180	68	16	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	14	209	79	13	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	10	192	73	31	12	4	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	8	176	67	47	18	4	2
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)	62	23	183	69	12	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	18	180	68	27	10	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	17	171	65	26	10	11	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	13	177	67	27	10	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	70	27	179	68	10	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	78	30	168	64	11	4	1	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 all 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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 pupils' 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.



18 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of The Hurst Community College, Tadley RG26 5NL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we recently visited your school. Here are our main findings, although we hope that some of you will read the full report.

Your school has improved significantly since the last inspection and now provides a good quality of education. As a result, achievement by the end of Year 11 has improved and examination results are rising quickly. Your school has a number of key strengths.

- The curriculum provides a much better range of courses than before. The good range of BTEC courses has enabled some of you who find more traditional courses very difficult to secure good qualifications.
- Your teachers have worked hard to improve the quality of lessons. As a result, the large majority of lessons help you make good progress.
- Improvements in science have helped to ensure that achievement in science is now good. The school's work to raise achievement in mathematics has also become increasingly effective, and higher proportions of students now do well in Key Stage 4 modular tests than before.
- You receive good quality care, guidance and support and adults provide excellent care whenever you need help to sort out personal or relationship problems.

We have asked your teachers to improve the school further by ensuring that:

- teaching always fully meets everybody's needs, so that you all make good progress in every lesson, regardless of your ability or background
- more lessons include activities that encourage everyone to be fully involved in the learning
- subject leaders set the most challenging targets to accelerate your achievement even more
- leaders measure how well lessons meet the differing needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, so that your teachers can be sure they are providing the right support.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Burton

Her Majesty's Inspector

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