

Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105853
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324286
Inspection date	18 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	1195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Parker
Headteacher	Mr Colin Burnett
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2005
School address	Cornfield Street Milnrow Rochdale Lancashire OL16 3DR
Telephone number	01706 641541
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the college and investigated the following issues:

- how high standards are and how well pupils achieve
- the impact of teaching on pupils' progress
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in raising standards and achievement.

Other aspects of the college's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the college's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in the report.

Description of the school

Hollingworth College is larger than the average secondary school. It serves the community in Milnrow and its environs where socio-economic circumstances are similar to those typical nationally. Almost all pupils are White British, although few in number, pupils of Pakistani heritage form the largest minority ethnic group. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is slightly higher than average. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the number with a statement of special educational need is below average. The college has held specialist status for business and enterprise since July 2006. It holds an array of awards including Artsmark Gold, Sportsmark Bronze, Eco-school Silver and Healthy Schools status. The college gained the Inclusion Quality Mark, Partnership Training and Creative Partnership status earlier this year. It has been recognised as an Investor In People for nine years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College provides its pupils with an outstanding education. The unswerving focus of the headteacher on raising standards and ensuring that every pupil achieves as well as they can is pivotal to the college's success. His clear vision and unequivocal direction set the climate for an energetic institution with a sense of common purpose. The headteacher is ably supported in this relentless drive for success by the recently formed senior team. Leadership at all levels is well developed, with clear lines of accountability supported by highly efficient and effective management systems. Well embedded, rigorous procedures for checking and monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the college's performance provide leaders with an accurate picture of strengths and areas for further development. Rapid, and when required, radical responses to comparative weaknesses are testimony to a corporate determination to strive for the best for all. The benefits of this are clearly evident in improving achievement and rising standards.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the college varies year-on-year but is broadly average. Overall pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make outstanding progress, meeting or exceeding challenging targets in almost all subjects at the end of Key Stage 4. In 2007, GCSE results were well above average with 70% of pupils gaining at least five passes at grades A* to C, and 65% attaining a minimum of five good passes including qualifications in English and mathematics. Teachers' assessments for 2008 are a little lower, reflecting the lower standards on entry of the outgoing Year 11 cohort. Nonetheless, 61% gained five or more good GCSE passes including qualifications in English and mathematics. Some 99% of pupils, a well-above average proportion, gained at least five GCSE passes, maintaining a trend that demonstrates well how effectively the college ensures that all are included. Results in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), the college's specialist areas, confirm that standards in these subjects continue to be well above average. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils entered for AS examinations in either art or ICT, achieved a pass rate of 95%. Year 10 pupils, entering GCSE examinations early, had considerable success with 100% gaining grades C and above in art and ICT and 87% reaching the same level in statistics. The college's robust tracking information indicates that current Year 11 pupils are on course to reach well above average standards; inspection evidence confirms this.

Assessment data for the last two years shows that, from their starting points, pupils made good progress at Key Stage 3 to reach standards that were broadly average in the core subjects. This year's Key Stage 3 national test results for English are not available. The provisional results for mathematics and science suggest an improving picture. In addition, approximately a quarter of Year 8 pupils were entered early for Key Stage 3 national tests in mathematics; they had exceptional success with all reaching Level 6 and 96% attaining Levels 7 and 8.

Pupils' outstanding achievement is a consequence of outstanding teaching and learning. A notable feature of lessons is the very good relationships between teachers and pupils. Teaching is very well matched to pupils' abilities, employing a wide range of activities that cater for all learning styles and engage pupils fully. Lessons move at a rapid pace. Good use of questions challenges pupils to explain their thinking and justify their answers. Well embedded self- and peer-assessment successfully encourages pupils both to take responsibility for their own learning and to collaborate effectively. Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a good contribution to learning, especially for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Imaginative, flexible and responsive design and planning provide pupils with an outstanding curriculum. It is very well matched to their individual needs and instrumental in raising their aspirations. For instance, in Years 8 and 9 the curriculum enables higher attainers to enter national tests and GCSE examinations early. They can build on this at Key Stage 4 by following additional GCSE and AS level courses. Pupils say that such opportunities are exciting and motivate them well. For lower attainers in Years 8 and 9 a focus on core skills, through a smaller number of subjects, delivered in the main by form tutors, helps to promote learning alongside well-being. Vulnerable Year 7 pupils learn in a small 'nurture' group that supports their transition from primary education and provides them with the extra help they need. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities, many of which focus on business and enterprise. These, together with well above average standards and the many opportunities for collaborative learning in all subjects, ensure that pupils' preparation for the world of work is outstanding.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy college and are proud of it. Their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good overall. However, the college is striving to develop further links with the community. Pupils behave well and sometimes better than this. Older pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, for instance as prefects and young leaders and are mature in their approach to these. Pupils welcome the opportunities provided by college councils to express their views because staff take these seriously and act on them. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is very well developed and rates of participation in sport are high. The college has taken robust measures to improve attendance which, while rising gradually, remains broadly average.

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. Pupils are very appreciative of this and were keen to tell inspectors that it is true for all regardless of need and ability. They described staff as 'always willing to help'. Strong links with parents are reflected in the very high number of questionnaires returned. Parents, too, appreciate the care given to their children: support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was particularly praiseworthy. Typical comments are: 'the extra support put in place for my child was extremely impressive'; 'the college did a fantastic and thorough job at sorting issues out'; 'any problems are resolved promptly'. The college has a cohesive approach to fostering academic and personal achievement. Academic guidance is well-founded, regular and systematic. When pupils fall short of their challenging targets, a range of appropriate interventions such as revision clubs and mentoring are employed successfully to support them. Child protection procedures are thorough and clearly understood.

The college's capacity to improve is outstanding. Since the last inspection all aspects of the college's work have improved. The college has been quick to embrace its specialist status as a catalyst for improvement. Resources have been used very effectively, for instance, to reduce class sizes; share good practice in the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and enhance the contribution of ICT to learning. Productive partnerships with a number of primary schools are well established; community links are developing gradually. Governance is outstanding. The governing body has rigorous systems in place to ensure that the college provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve rates of attendance.

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	2
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 learners' needs?	1
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

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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

Thank you very much for the help you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who gave up some time to come and tell us about life at the college. We judge your college to be outstanding and understand why you are so proud of it.

The college has many strengths. We think the main ones are:

- the outstanding progress you all make to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 11
- the opportunities you have to follow accelerated courses and gain qualifications early
- the way in which your teachers challenge you to think hard
- the flexible groupings that enable you to do as well as possible
- the opportunities to participate in business and enterprise activities that help prepare you very well for the world of work
- your good behaviour
- the exceptional care provided for you all and especially for those of you who experience difficulties learning
- your headteacher, who works tirelessly to ensure that you do as well as you can and have all the help you need to succeed.

There is one main area that requires improvement and each one of you has a part to play in this. Your attendance is lower than it should be. You must ensure that you come to college unless you really are not well enough to do so. Try not to take holidays in term time.

We enjoyed visiting the college and wish you all every success in the future.