

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION REPORT

COLYTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Colyton, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113555

Headteacher: Mr B J Sindall

Lead Inspector: David Potter

Dates of inspection: 26 - 30 January 2004

Inspection number: 259358

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

OVERALL EVALUATION

The performance of this **outstanding school** continues to improve and accelerate away from that of similar schools. Despite the school's position at the top of national league tables, its leaders remain ambitious for further improvement and are skilled in pulling the right levers to bring that improvement about. The focus on helping each individual achieve potential means that students of all abilities learn and achieve exceptionally well. Relationships are outstanding: students and staff work in partnership. All resources are deployed with great skill to promote a culture of learning, improvement and success. The school provides excellent value for money.

The school's **main strengths and weaknesses** are:

- The headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, ensures that everyone connected with the school is committed to a clear vision of continuous improvement. As a result:
 - test and examination results are outstanding at all levels and continue to improve;
 - all students - including the gifted and talented, those of average ability and those with a learning difficulty - make excellent progress and achieve extremely well;
 - teaching is consistently of very high quality, with much that is excellent;
 - students are very capable learners who believe in their own ability to achieve.
- Students' attitudes to work and to the school, and their relationships with each other and with teachers, are exemplary and contribute greatly to their own and the school's success.
- The school is excellently governed and managed: evaluation and planning are exemplary and resources are exceptionally well managed.

Improvement since the last inspection in February 1998 has been excellent; very high standards and excellent quality have been driven still higher and very good progress has been made with ICT, the one weakness in the last report. The commitment to go on improving is admirable.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 11 and 13 results

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2001	2002	2003	2003
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	A*	A*	A*	A*
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	A*	A*	A*	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9*

Results are outstanding, placing Colyton in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country at all levels and in all recent years. GCSE and A-level results in 2003 were the best of any mixed school, maintained or independent, in England. For several years, pass rates at GCSE and A-level have been close to 100 per cent; only a handful of grades are below a B at GCSE or below a C at A-level. Students across the school reach **very high standards** in all subjects. Standards are remarkably high in the sciences, mathematics, modern languages, art and physical education. Students' written and spoken answers are detailed, extended, sophisticated and presented with enormous care.

Achievement is excellent for all age groups. Students enter the school in Year 7 with well-above-average attainment and go on to reach the remarkable standards in tests and exams at ages 14, 16 and 18 described above. These results therefore represent very good progress and the value added by the school is among the highest in the country. Achievement is very good in almost all subjects and excellent in several; the cumulative effect is excellent. Gifted and talented students achieve excellence in academic, sporting and cultural fields, and those who enter the school with relatively low attainment do

exceptionally well. The school has a small number of students with a learning difficulty, most of them with a serious hearing impairment; these students achieve as well as their peers. Students' literacy and their ability to use mathematics are excellent and their ICT skills are very good.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

The personal development of students of all ages in the school is **excellent**, as is the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development: these are great strengths of the school. The mutual respect between students and staff, and the partnership for learning between them, are two of the keys to the school's outstanding success. The **behaviour, attendance and punctuality** of students are all **excellent**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides an **excellent** education to all of its students. **Teaching is excellent** because of its consistently high quality; very little is less than good and none unsatisfactory. Combined with the excellent ethos, work ethic and relationships, the careful planning, pace and challenge of the teaching lead to **excellent learning** throughout the school. The **curriculum is very good**: it is very well matched to the needs of the students and contributes to the very high standards achieved. Provision for students with a hearing impairment is excellent. The **guidance and support** provided for students are **excellent**. Their work is assessed regularly and rigorously, and they are given clear guidance on what needs to be done to achieve their predicted results. Careers guidance is excellent and ensures that students are well prepared for the next stages in their lives. Links with the community, especially other schools, are excellent. The school is well resourced and accommodation is good. New buildings are of very high quality and there are plans to replace the inadequate ones. The site has been made very attractive and is very well looked after by site staff and students alike.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Central to the school's success has been the clarity of its key aim and the consistency with which that aim has been pursued over many years - a belief that all students can achieve success and a relentless search for improvements in teaching to enable them to do so. This drive has been led by the headteacher and shared by governors, staff, students and parents. All the school's innovations and the deployment of all its resources are focused on achieving this key purpose. The support and challenge provided by governors are excellent: they relentlessly pursue best value and excellence in all they do. The support provided by the administrative, technical, catering and site staff is of the highest quality. **Leadership, management and governance** are therefore **all excellent**. The very high standards attained by the students and the excellent achievement, teaching and learning mean that the school provides excellent value for money for its students and the community it serves.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Students have extremely positive views of the school, recognising the very good teaching they receive and the excellent relationships. Parents strongly support the school and are delighted by the progress their children make, by the teaching and support they receive and by the atmosphere of learning and high expectations that pervade. Both parents and students find the staff approachable, quick to respond and willing to 'go the extra mile'; they also believe that the school is very well led and managed. Some parents consider that the curriculum is narrow and regret the loss of food technology, textiles and Spanish, and reductions in the time available for physical education and sport.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

Inspectors judged that there are no areas of significant weakness in the school or sixth form and that the minor areas for improvement raised with the school already feature in its development plan.

THE SIXTH FORM AT COLYTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

OVERALL EVALUATION

The sixth form is **excellent** and **highly cost-effective**. Results of AS/A-level examinations consistently place the school at or near the top of national performance tables; in the light of their attainment on entry to the school, achievement is outstanding. Students enter the sixth form with excellent GCSE results, make rapid progress and go on to achieve outstanding results at AS and Alevel. Students are very skilled learners and have outstandingly positive attitudes. Teaching is consistently of very high quality and excellent leadership is driving standards still higher.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are high throughout the sixth form; many students make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is scholarly and consistently of high quality.
- Students manage their own learning and have excellent learning skills.
- Assessment of students' work and progress is excellent and helps them achieve.
- Students work in partnership with their teachers to achieve success.
- Students act as role models and leaders for younger students.
- Those who lead the sixth form and the school as a whole focus on achieving success for all and on year-on-year improvement.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Subject	Evaluation
English, languages and communication	English French	Very good: students achieve high standards because teaching is consistently very good. Excellent: students make excellent progress and achieve very high standards.
Mathematics	Mathematics	Excellent: standards are outstanding because of excellent teaching.
Science	Biology	Excellent: standards are outstanding and achievement is very high because of the very stimulating, challenging teaching.
Humanities	History	Very good: students maintain the high levels of achievement established earlier in the school because teaching is very good.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	Technology (product design)	Very good: students achieve very well because of the quality of teaching and the partnership between teachers and students
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	Physical education	Excellent: results and students' achievement are excellent because teaching is consistently very good and often excellent.

The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good, good, satisfactory- unsatisfactory,- poor, very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.

ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The advice, guidance and support provided for students are excellent. Their work is assessed regularly and rigorously, and they are given clear guidance on what needs to be

done to achieve their predicted standard of work. Careers guidance is excellent and ensures that students are well prepared for the next stages in their lives.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

The sixth form is led and managed in the same outstanding way as the school as a whole. Every aspect, from long-term vision to day-to-day running and the support for individual students, is run extremely well and helps drive up standards.

STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students speak very highly of the sixth form. They value the partnership with teachers, summed up in the balance between challenge and support in teaching and in the quality of advice and guidance they receive. They appreciate how well the school and the sixth form are run.

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