

Coopers Technology College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101667
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	335766
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Bill Stoneham

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Comprehensive
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the college roll	1528
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	336
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Downes
Principal	Mrs Shirley Puxty
Date of previous college inspection	December 2006
College address	Hawkwood Lane Chislehurst Kent BR7 5PS
Telephone number	020 8467 3263
Fax number	020 8295 0342
Email address	adm@coopers.bromley.sch.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St. Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by six additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 38 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the college's work, and looked at documents including the college's self-evaluation, strategic plans and policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. In addition 19 parental questionnaires and the college's own recently commissioned parental survey were scrutinised.

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

- the students' performance in public examinations and how well they attain
- the progress made by different groups of students
- the improvements made by the college since its last inspection, particularly how teaching and learning and the curriculum have improved
- levels of attainment in the sixth form and the progress made, especially in Year 12.

Information about the school

Coopers is a larger than average specialist technology college. Its specialist subjects are technology, mathematics and science. It has a comprehensive intake, with a larger than average sixth form. The sixth form offers a variety of courses at different levels and also acts as a football academy for a local semi-professional team. Most students are of White British origin and very few do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although it is average for those with statements relating to their needs. Those with statements usually have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties.

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

Coopers Technology College offers its students a good level of education. Some aspects are outstanding. These include its capacity for sustained improvement, the care, guidance and support offered, the positive contribution made by the students to the college and its wider community and the quality of governance. In addition the students are proud of their college and are keen to help it improve further.

The excellent principal and her senior team have set a clear agenda to raise standards and to ensure that all students achieve well. They are strongly supported by a dedicated and professional team of staff who work hard and are committed to securing further improvements. Most students, including the small numbers from various minority ethnic groups, are now achieving well and attainment is above average. There have been significant improvements in target setting, student tracking and monitoring and reporting procedures and these have been integral in securing improved results. GCSE results have shown a significant improvement over the last three years and are now above average. They are also above average in the specialist subjects of mathematics and science, and have shown much improvement in technology.

Levels of attainment are rising in the sixth form and especially in Year 13. However, in Year 12 too many students are gaining U grades in their AS Level courses. Progress is satisfactory but is limited by the lower than expected attendance of some students, especially in Year 12.

In most lessons students' learning and progress are good because of effective teaching. The college's monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and shows that improvements have been made. In a minority of lessons, mainly for lower attainers, the work is not sufficiently varied resulting in learning that is no more than satisfactory. In most classes students' behaviour is good. Students are enthusiastic and keen to learn but, in a minority of classes, mainly in Key Stage 3, learning is impeded by some silly behaviour from small groups of students, which is not adequately addressed by the teachers. In most lessons, however, learning is good because the teachers challenges the students, expectations are high and the students are given opportunities to work on their own.

An especially strong aspect of the college's work is the care, guidance and support it offers. Well-targeted support for all students has enabled them to make the best of the many opportunities available. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care,

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

guidance and support and the college works harmoniously and successfully with families, students and a plethora of agencies to sustain learning. All students are valued but the college makes extra efforts to ensure that vulnerable students, and those facing challenging and trying circumstances, are offered excellent advice, care and support.

All aspects of the college's work are carefully monitored by a highly professional, committed and caring governing body who really do fulfil the role of 'critical friends'. They make an exceptional contribution to the work of the college and have put in place robust systems for evaluating the college's work. They know the college well and they use this knowledge most effectively to inform their own planning.

Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in levels of attainment, the progress students make, attendance, teaching and learning, the curriculum, the care of students and leadership and management. This strong track record of improvement amply illustrates the ambition and drive that is provided by senior staff and the governors. Through rigorous self-evaluation the college knows its strengths and where areas for further development exist. These factors illustrate well the outstanding capacity that the college has to improve further.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Provide even higher quality learning by ensuring that:
 - there are always sufficient variety of activities in lessons to keep all students engaged
 - the work set is always relevant to all students in the group
 - staff consistently apply the college's behaviour policy so that learning is not impeded by the inappropriate behaviour of a small minority.
- Improve academic performance in the sixth form by ensuring that:
 - there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, including more opportunities for the students to work independently
 - levels of attendance to lessons, especially in Year 12, are significantly improved
 - all students in Year 12 successfully complete their AS level courses.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The proportion of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE, including English and mathematics, has risen sharply over the last three years and is now significantly above average. The college has analysed its examination outcomes in detail and is aware that within an overall picture of sustained improvement, different groups of students have not necessarily always progressed at the same rate, or at an acceptable rate. Through this analysis and detailed target setting and tracking, most groups of students now make good progress. This includes the small numbers from

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

minority ethnic groups and students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Lesson observations confirmed the improvements that have been made and that learning is good. In most lessons students are set appropriate challenges, levels of attainment are rising, students enjoy their work and their progress is good.

Most students say they feel safe in college and that they have positive relationships with their teachers and other staff. The students say that incidents of bullying and poor behaviour are rare and that the numbers of such incidents have dropped over the last few years. They also say that any issues that do arise are handled well by staff.

Attendance is above average. College staff have worked hard to improve attendance and to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent. This drive has helped to raise attainment and levels of progress. Most say they have an understanding of how to live healthily and they are appreciative of the range of activities available. Many extra-curricular events are well supported. These include activities as diverse as street dance, Russian and Chinese. As one girl commented: 'It's not just sport on offer. There's loads of other things.' Many are involved in charitable efforts and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Lessons in a range of subjects, including personal development and religious education, help students to understand and respect societies, cultures and religions other than their own.

Developments in vocational education, the quality of advice offered and the emphasis placed on developing key literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills means that the development of the students' future economic well-being is good. This is reflected in the rising levels of attainment.

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	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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	2

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

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

contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Learning is good in the majority of lessons; in some it is outstanding. The best lessons successfully enthuse and engage the students and learning proceeds at a lively pace. Although teaching has improved and has contributed to higher standards and better progress, senior staff are not complacent and they are aware that scope for further improvement exists, especially in terms of staff providing more variety in lessons and ensuring that isolated incidents of poor behaviour are not allowed to impede learning.

The students are offered a good curriculum that meets their needs well. Students are well prepared for the next stage in their lives beyond the age of sixteen, with many opting to stay at the college for their sixth form education because they know their needs will be met. The guidance students are given as they move through Year 11 and into the sixth form is improving. The students are appreciative of the help and support they receive, something that was also reflected in parental responses to a recent college issued questionnaire. Transition arrangements into Year 7 are very good and vulnerable students and those facing difficulties are supported very well by college staff and by staff from various agencies with whom the college works in partnership.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

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

The college is focussed on serving its students well and securing year-on-year improvements. Morale is high and staff at all levels are committed to improvement and they broadcast this desire with abundant enthusiasm. Senior staff, governors and all other staff take their statutory duties seriously and the college provides a safe environment in which to work and study. Safeguarding arrangements are good and fully meet requirements. Many efforts have been made to ensure that the site is safe and staff, at all levels, take their responsibilities seriously.

Equal opportunity underpins the college’s work. The analysis of the performance of minority ethnic students and other groups of students, and the associated support programmes that are then applied if deemed necessary, are indicative of how seriously the college takes this responsibility. Community cohesion is promoted well through the curriculum and the many extra-curricular activities such as charity events and fostering international and cultural awareness through World Challenge. College students participate enthusiastically in the local community through its partnerships with local schools and with community groups. Particular mention should be made of the work that college students do in partnership with the special school that shares the college’s site. This particular partnership benefits the students in many ways, not least in terms of the responsibility they show.

The college is improving well and offers good value for money. A key reason for some of the recent improvements is the success of the college’s tracking systems. Target setting is thorough and students’ progress is carefully monitored. This allows quick identification of any areas of underachievement. The senior team provide high quality leadership. They are ambitious and they are well supported by the rest of the staff. There is a strong commitment to securing continual improvement.

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	1
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

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

Sixth form

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory but improving. This is because the quality of leadership and management has been significantly improved, though many of the measures taken by the new management team have not had sufficient time to bear tangible results.

Concerted efforts have been made to overcome previous weaknesses. A good curriculum is now provided and far better efforts are made to ensure that students are placed on appropriate courses. Some teething problems still remain and this is reflected in the number of students gaining U grades in their Year 12 AS level examinations. Senior staff acknowledge that this is unacceptable and remedies are now in place. Some students do not have good attendance records and this is having an adverse impact on their attainment and the progress they make. The situation is somewhat different in Year 13. The students are more committed, their attendance is better and results are improving.

The care, guidance and support offered to the students are good. Staff are keen to support students and to ensure that their future pathways are clear and accessible. Target setting and monitoring have improved and this too is helping to raise standards. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but the pace and quality of learning in some lessons is impeded by absence, especially where group work is needed. There is also a tendency for staff to play safe and to provide answers too readily rather than challenging the students to determine the outcomes for themselves.

The students enjoy the sixth form and are appreciative of the many recent developments including the improved curriculum, the closer monitoring of progress and the football academy. The sixth form enriches college life. Most students make a good contribution to college life and act as good role models by accepting responsibility and immersing themselves in college life.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Only a small number of parents completed the OFSTED questionnaire; approximately a third of all parents completed a recent college-based survey. Both indicate that

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

parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the college and are satisfied that students are kept safe, learn well and enjoy college life. A small minority are concerned that the college does not deal effectively with incidents of unruly behaviour. Parents believe that the college is led and managed very well. The inspection team concur with the views expressed by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Coopers Technology 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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1528 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	7	37	10	53	1	5	1	5
The school keeps my child safe	6	32	12	63	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	7	37	10	53	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	32	13	68	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	26	14	74	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	7	37	11	58	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	4	21	10	53	2	11	0	0
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)	3	16	12	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	5	26	11	58	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	5	26	13	68	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	37	11	58	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	21	15	79	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	6	32	12	63	1	5	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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>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.



3 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Coopers Technology College, Chislehurst, BR7 5PS

Thank you so much for helping me and my colleagues during our recent inspection visit. We were impressed by your attitudes and the friendliness with which you greeted us. We concluded that you receive a good education. Some aspects of the education provided are outstanding. These include the care, guidance and support you are offered, the leadership provided by the governors and the capacity created by your excellent principal and her team to secure further improvements. We also concluded that the contribution you make to your college and wider community is excellent: you use your student voice well and support various activities with enthusiasm and genuine commitment. Well done!

Though many aspects of the college's work impressed us, we have made a few suggestions for further improvement. We have asked that:

- learning is further improved through staff ensuring that all set work is relevant to your needs and that some lessons contain more activities
- behaviour in a few lessons is improved.

You also have a responsibility to ensure this happens and your staff must apply the behaviour code with consistency.

We have concluded that the sixth form is improving, but, at present, it is satisfactory rather than good because some of the examination results are not high enough. We have asked that:

- staff make lessons more challenging
- improvements are made to levels of student attendance, especially in Year 12.

Thank you again for making our visit so enjoyable. We hope that you will continue to enjoy college life and we would like to wish you every success in your future career

Yours sincerely

Bill Stoneham
Additional Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**