

Brixham College

Higher Ranscombe Road, Brixham, TQ5 9HF

Inspection dates 30 April–01 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The Principal and senior leaders provide effective leadership. Together they have raised students' achievement and improved the quality of teaching.
- Students achieve well. They make good progress from their starting points across most subjects.
- Relationships in lessons are strong. Students respond positively to teachers' instructions, allowing lessons to proceed at a good pace.
- In the core subjects at Key Stage 4, students monitor their progress effectively through the key skills and concepts of each course. This enables them to understand clearly which aspects of their subjects they can do well and the areas they need to develop further.
- Students' behaviour is good. They are polite and conduct themselves well both in and out of lessons.
- Staff at the college ensure students are safe. Students speak highly of what the school does to support them. Students are able to self-refer themselves and receive effective individualised support for their social, emotional and academic needs.
- The sixth form, which opened in September 2013, is good. Students are taught well and make good progress.
- The governing body has a sound understanding of the college's strengths and areas in need of development. Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to the senior leadership team. As a result, the college is continuing to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While boys achieve well, their achievement is not as high as that for girls.
- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Some learning activities planned by teachers do not enable students to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Marking does not consistently inform students of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Attendance is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 39 episodes of teaching taught by 38 teachers. Ten of these observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. There were also a number of short visits to classes.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior leaders, heads of faculties, members of the governing body and groups of students. Discussions took place with two representatives from the local authority, including the designated officer, and with students at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including information on students' achievement, the college's self-evaluation and improvement plan, minutes of meetings, and records relating to the monitoring of teaching, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses to the online Parent View survey, five telephone calls received, one letter from a parent and 62 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jackie Jones

Additional Inspector

Ann Sydney

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Full report

Information about this school

- Brixham College is an average-sized secondary school. It converted to become an academy school on 1 January 2012. When its predecessor school, Brixham College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The college opened its sixth form in September 2013.
- Most students are of White British heritage. The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is above average. This is additional government funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and students with a parent in the armed forces.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs and those who need some extra help is above the national average. Those who need more extra help or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The college has an enhanced provision. This is a specially tailored programme for students with a diagnosis of autism.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- Some students attend access courses at South Devon College.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise students' achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the progress boys make is accelerated to bring their achievement closer to that of girls
 - learning activities enable students to make the progress of which they are capable
 - marking and feedback by teachers consistently inform students how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Raise attendance to above the national average.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students enter the college with levels of attainment that are significantly lower than average. The proportion of Year 11 students who attain five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, is broadly in line with the national average.
- Students' achievement took a slight dip in 2013. Senior leaders have implemented effective initiatives to strengthen the collection and analysis of information on students' progress and to raise the accountability of all staff for the students they teach. As a result of these initiatives, current students' achievement has risen.
- The progress students make across a range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good. Achievement is particularly high in science, art and design and food technology. Students do not make good progress in modern foreign languages. The college is aware of this and has conducted a thorough review of this department and has identified key areas for improvement.
- Work in students' books is well presented, showing that they take pride in their work. The quality of work seen in books is often at a higher level than students' targets.
- Boys achieve well but the progress they make is not as high as that of girls. On occasions, some boys do not work to their full potential. This is not always addressed by teachers.
- Following its opening in September 2013, the sixth form currently accommodates only Year 12 students. The quality of teaching, the college's tracking information and the work seen in books indicates that these students are making good progress and, in some subjects, outstanding progress.
- The college uses the additional government funding effectively to support eligible students. These students have access to a wide range of academic, social and emotional support to help them achieve their potential. The college also employs a primary trained teacher to develop students' literacy and numeracy skills in Year 7 and Year 8.
- The gap between the achievement of students eligible for the pupil premium and their peers has closed significantly. These students are currently leaving the college around a quarter of a grade behind their peers in English and about half a grade behind in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs receive high-quality support both in and out of lessons. They make achieve well across a range of subjects. Extra sessions to support students' literacy and numeracy skills enable these students to make accelerated progress.
- The special programme for students with autistic spectrum disorder is good. Students who access this achieve well. They are also supported effectively to be able to access lessons in mainstream classes.
- The most able students make good progress across most subjects. Not enough students, however, attained A* or A grades in mathematics in 2013. This is partly due to the college entering all students early for their mathematics GCSE. This entry policy has now been changed and students sit their mathematics examination when they are deemed to have the best chance of achieving their full potential. The college's current tracking information and work seen in books indicates that far more students will attain the higher grades in 2014.
- A small number of students are educated at South Devon College. This provision is carefully monitored by the college. These students achieve well.
- Most parents who responded to the Parent View survey feel that their child is making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers' enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge inspire students to engage fully in lessons.
- Relationships between staff and students are very positive. Students respond quickly and willingly to teachers' instructions, thereby maximising learning time.
- Teachers use highly effective questioning techniques. They probe students' understanding to assess their knowledge and to deepen their learning.
- Teachers use information on students' prior progress to inform their planning to provide suitable activities for the range of ability levels in their class, including the most able. Teachers also provide good opportunities to develop students' literacy skills across all subjects.
- Occasionally, learning activities that teachers provide do not enable students to make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in a mathematics lesson, students were working through a series of questions. All of the questions were similar and required the students to complete the same routine. Students were not provided with any questions to challenge and probe their understanding further.
- In English and mathematics at Key Stage 4, students effectively monitor their progress through the key skills and concepts of each course. This enables them to gain a good understanding of their development and where they need to improve. There are plans to extend this approach across all subjects and key stages.
- Additional adults support students effectively both in and outside of the classroom. This enables them to make accelerated progress.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is sometimes superficial and cursory. When it is done well, students understand how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good. Students are polite and courteous and conduct themselves well in and out of lessons.
- Students wear their uniform correctly and arrive at school with the necessary equipment. They respect the school environment, dropping very little litter, and there is no graffiti.
- Students speak highly of the student services provision. They are able to self-refer to this resource and receive effective individualised support for their social, emotional and academic needs. The provision encompasses a range of high-quality support systems, including counsellors, a college nurse and mediation and restorative work.
- The college uses an electronic system to record information on each student, including positive rewards and incidents of poor behaviour. This information is accessible by all staff and enables them to monitor students closely and to provide personalised support when necessary. As a result, the number of incidents of disruptive behaviour and the proportion of students being excluded have declined significantly.
- The college's work to keep students safe and secure is good.
- Students have a good awareness of different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe. There has been a particular emphasis on e-safety and homophobic bullying. Students are very clear that the casual use of the word 'gay' is not acceptable.
- When incidents of bullying do occur, students indicate that they have an adult they can talk to. They say that, usually, the college deals with these issues swiftly.
- Students' attendance has improved over the last three years. It is, however, still below the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal and senior leaders provide good leadership and communicate their high expectations. Consequently, they have succeeded in raising students' achievement and improving the quality of teaching.
- The college's self-evaluation is accurate. The senior leaders have identified the college's strengths and the areas that are in need of further development.
- Leaders with responsibility for subjects, faculty leaders, are increasingly holding teachers in their faculties to account for the progress of the students they teach. They rigorously monitor the quality of teaching, work in books and students' progress data, discussing any underachievement with teachers and implementing extra support to enable students to catch up.
- The college has implemented 'faculty enquiries', which enable senior leaders to review the effectiveness of key aspects of each faculty. The reports produced are accurate and ask probing questions of faculty leaders to maintain further improvement. Faculty leaders are using these 'enquiries' effectively to develop plans to ensure their departments continue to improve.
- The quality of teaching is good and is improving. Teachers work well across subjects to share best practice. This is improving the proportion of teaching that is outstanding. There is also good, personalised support for teachers requiring improvement.
- The procedures to manage staff performance have been strengthened. All staff targets are closely linked to ensuring students make at least good progress, and are linked to salary progression.
- The college's range of subjects is well designed and provides students with an interesting range of academic and extra-curricular experiences to enable them to be successful. The range of subjects on offer at Key Stage 4 has been strengthened through links with a local further education provider and also by the college offering new subjects itself, for example motor vehicle studies and law.
- Students recognise, and fully appreciate, the range of extra support and revisions sessions that are provided. Students' individual needs are known well by staff at the college. Through personalised support, each student has an equal opportunity to be able to achieve his or her potential.
- The college's spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is a strength. Through 'beliefs and cultures' lessons, specialist arts status and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, students receive regular opportunities to develop these aspects of their education. Students have opportunities to visit places such as South Africa and the battlefields in Belgium and take part in a range of music, drama and arts activities.
- The external support partner provides an accurate assessment of the college's current position. He also ensures the college is left with clear targets to continue to move it forward prior to his next visit.
- The college meets the current safeguarding requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good awareness of the college's strengths and areas for development, particularly with regard to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Governors provide an appropriate level of challenge and support to senior leaders to maintain improvements. They undergo regular training to ensure they have the appropriate up-to-date skills and knowledge. They understand performance data and how the college's performance compares with that of other schools. Governors implement a strict pay policy, ensuring that they reward the best practitioners and withhold pay awards for any underperformance. They are aware of the positive impact that the extra government funding is having on raising achievement. They do not, however, have a clear enough understanding of how this money is allocated. All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137755
Local authority	Torbay
Inspection number	441133

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1006
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	48
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Prowse
Principal	Mark Eager
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01803 858271
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