

# Exmouth Community College

Gipsy Lane, Exmouth, EX8 3AF

**Inspection dates** 4–5 July 2013

|                                |                      |                          |          |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>   | Previous inspection: | Not previously inspected |          |
|                                | This inspection:     | <b>Good</b>              | <b>2</b> |
| Achievement of pupils          |                      | Good                     | 2        |
| Quality of teaching            |                      | Good                     | 2        |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils |                      | Outstanding              | 1        |
| Leadership and management      |                      | Good                     | 2        |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The Principal provides the college with inspirational leadership. Senior leaders provide strong support for his vision and all are determined for the college to become outstanding.
- Senior and other leaders have an accurate view of the college's strengths and priorities for development. This is helping them to improve teaching and increase students' achievement. Governors hold senior leaders to account very well.
- Students' achievement is good. It has improved significantly in English to be close to that in mathematics.
- Students' progress is monitored extremely well and, as a consequence of well-targeted support, the gaps between different groups are closing rapidly.
- Teaching is at least good, and much is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and create calm and purposeful learning environments.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make exceptional progress.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. The college is extremely harmonious; students from a wide range of backgrounds work very well together and show great respect for one another and for staff. Their attitudes to learning are also extremely positive.
- Students are kept safe. Their attendance has improved significantly and the rate of exclusions has fallen to be below average.
- The curriculum provides a range of opportunities for students to achieve their best. As a result, students are extremely well prepared for the next steps in their education, employment or training.
- The sixth form is good. The majority of students make good progress to achieve high grades across a range of subjects.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Consequently, not all students make better than expected progress.
- Not all lesson activities challenge students to think deeply or work independently.
- Leadership of the sixth form does not always make sure that the best practice is shared for the benefit of all students.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 57 lessons, of which eight were joint observations with senior leaders. They also attended an assembly and part of a 'Latin day' for Year 9 students.
- Meetings were held with college leaders, staff and groups of students from Years 7 to 13. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body and held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner .
- Inspectors observed the college's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including the college's self-evaluation and development plans, records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance, and data on students' current attainment and progress.
- Inspectors took account of the 82 online responses to the Parent View questionnaire, one written comment from a parent and two comments made via Ofsted.
- Inspectors took account of the 210 responses to the staff questionnaire and looked at documentation relating to performance targets for staff, the college's monitoring of teaching and anonymised evidence of pay progression.

## Inspection team

|                                  |                      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Caroline Dearden, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Lesley Greenway                  | Additional Inspector |
| Anthony Byrne                    | Additional Inspector |
| Marian Marks                     | Additional Inspector |
| Gary Kirkley                     | Additional Inspector |
| Phil Taylor                      | Additional Inspector |

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Exmouth Community College converted to become an academy school in April 2011. When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The college is a larger-than-average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children looked after by the local authority, students known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who receive support through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The majority of students are of White British heritage, with a below-average proportion from minority ethnic groups. A low proportion of students speak English as an additional language.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students attend alternative provision at Bicton College and Exeter College.
- The proportion of students staying on in the sixth form is below average but increasing.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by ensuring that all teachers challenge all students to:
  - show initiative
  - develop their thinking
  - work independently in lessons
  - extend their learning to make better-than-expected progress.
- Improve the quality of leadership in the sixth form so that all students make the same good or better progress by:
  - ensuring that the excellent practice evident in many lessons is shared for the benefit of all students' learning
  - making better use of assessment information in order to set the correct level of challenge for all students by drawing on existing excellent practice.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the college in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are mostly below average. In 2012, GCSE standards, based on the proportion of students achieving at least five A\* to C grades including English and mathematics, were average. Students achieve particularly well in mathematics, where the proportion making and exceeding expected progress in 2012 was above average. This is set to rise further this year.
- In English, standards in 2012 were below average. However, effective use of additional support and strategies to tackle boys' underachievement are leading to greatly improved progress, and results are set to rise. Information provided by the college indicates that the gap in achievement between English and mathematics has closed, with students likely to make better-than-expected progress in both subjects this year.
- The college makes very good use of early entry for GCSE mathematics to secure very good progress and the highest levels of achievement for all students, including the most able.
- Students' attainment is rising quickly across the college. This is strongest at Key Stage 4 where underachievement evident in the GCSE results for 2012 has been addressed. Excellent systems help teachers and college leaders to track the progress of all students regularly and rigorously. Any students falling behind are quickly identified and additional support is provided.
- Students attending alternative provision make good progress to achieve well in a range of qualifications, including GCSE English and mathematics. As a consequence, the attendance of this group of students is high, and only a very small number of students are not in education, employment or training when they leave the college.
- The college has made very effective use of the pupil premium to provide additional staff and intensive support to help students make progress. As a result, all eligible students progress well, and the gap in attainment between this group and other students is closing rapidly. In 2012, the attainment of eligible students was one grade behind other students in the school in English and one grade behind in mathematics.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress, especially in literacy skills, because of new systems introduced to provide expert and sustained support. For example, students joining the college with low reading ages typically improve by one year for each month of support.
- The college makes very good use of the Year 7 catch-up premium to fund additional specialist staff to help eligible students make rapid gains in reading and literacy.
- Students who speak English as an additional language or who are from minority ethnic heritages make exceptional progress to achieve GCSE grades higher than their college peers. This is because the support they are provided with helps them to make rapid gains in their understanding and use of the English language.
- Achievement in the sixth form is improving and progress is good across a range of subjects. However, the excellent practice of expecting students to achieve their aspirational targets is not uniformly applied to challenge all students and extend learning so that the students achieve the highest grades they can in all subjects.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teachers have very good relationships with their students and high expectations create a positive learning environment. In most cases, these high expectations extend to the work teachers set and the lesson activities they plan for students. For example, in an outstanding Year 9 French lesson, the teacher skilfully challenged students to develop their use of the language and engaged all students in speaking French.
- Where teaching is at its best, lessons provide excellent opportunities for students to discuss their ideas, develop their thinking and reasoning skills, and to work independently or in small groups.

For example, in an outstanding Year 12 physics lesson, the teacher used his expertise and professional skill to plan learning activities to meet the high ambitions of students, to extend their understanding and to achieve the highest grades.

- Occasionally, pupils do not progress as well as they should because teachers set work that does not enable all students to move forward at a fast enough pace. This is because the highest target grades or levels are not set as the minimum expectation or because teachers' questioning does not sufficiently challenge students to think deeply about their ideas and responses.
- Students' skills in reading and writing are developed across a wide range of subjects, as well as through specialised curriculum provision. Those students that need it receive exceptional additional help and support. In an outstanding Year 7 literacy lesson, teamwork and controlled discussion between students reinforced communication and helped to develop students' social skills. This was reinforced by the teacher setting individual targets for students which related to the use of punctuation and grammar.
- Students hold their teachers in high esteem and value both the academic and pastoral support they provide to help them succeed. As Year 11 students commented, 'It's not about teachers getting the best grades so that they look good; they genuinely care and want you to do your best.'
- Teaching in the sixth form is typically good or better. However, the best practice evident in many lessons is not consistently shared for the benefit of all students.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

- Students' behaviour in lessons and around the college at social times and lesson changeover is exemplary. The strong emphasis on mutual respect means that students are extremely courteous and polite, that difference is celebrated and that discrimination is not tolerated.
- Students' attitudes to learning are exceptional. Students know they are expected to work hard and consequently are determined to achieve their best.
- Students are well taught to assess risks. They understand the potentially harmful effects of drugs and alcohol. Students of all ages are able to explain the different forms of bullying and the risks of the internet. They say that bullying is not an issue. None of the students interviewed by inspectors had ever experienced bullying nor were they aware of any incidents involving their friends.
- Students, including those whose circumstances put them at risk of becoming vulnerable and those following alternative education off-site, feel exceptionally safe. This view is endorsed by the overwhelming majority of staff, and parents and carers, responding to the questionnaires.
- Attendance has improved to be above average and exclusions have reduced to be below average because of the college's determination to help all students achieve their best. Information provided by the college shows a marked improvement in the progress of students who previously had poor attendance.
- The college provides many opportunities for students to learn about different cultures and traditions, such as Year 9 students enjoying learning Latin.
- The excellent promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplified by students' high regard for the Principal, and in their belief that their growth as young adults with good prospects for the future is supported very well by the college.
- The college provides a wide range of activities for students to take on responsibilities, including Year 12 students mentoring Year 10 students to help them to develop their numeracy skills and to make good progress in mathematics.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The inspirational leadership of the Principal means that the senior leadership team and other leaders are resolute in their commitment to securing the highest quality teaching and standards of achievement.
- Rigorous procedures are used to evaluate teachers' performance. Staff are well supported to

improve and know they are accountable for the progress their students make. The college links salary progression robustly to students' performance.

- Systems to monitor students' progress and identify any underachievement are robust, so that additional support is provided where needed. This has led to more students, including those eligible for the pupil premium, making good progress. Together with the good relationships between students from different backgrounds, this shows the college's success in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- The curriculum is regularly reviewed by college leaders to make sure that it meets the needs, aspirations and interests of all students, including those in the sixth form. Where subjects have not been performing well, interventions to tackle underperformance are appropriate and well managed. Alongside improvements in teaching, this explains the rise in achievement this year.
- The college's judgements on the quality of its own work are extremely accurate. Senior leaders and governors are absolutely clear about where achievement, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management need to improve further.
- The college makes highly effective use of a wide range of partnerships. For example, members of staff have been working with feeder schools to improve standards of literacy in the primary sector so that students are better able to cope with the demands of a secondary curriculum when they join the college.
- Subject and pastoral leaders work very well together to provide appropriate, targeted and timely support for those students identified as underachieving.
- Leadership of the sixth form is not as strong as in the rest of the college. which means that the best practice and high aspirations are not uniformly shared for the benefit of all students and there is variation in the outcomes of different subjects.
- The advisor from the National College of School Leadership provides 'light-touch' support for this good college. Recent work has included development of other leaders' ability to recognise and build upon outstanding teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are proud of the college and its place in the community. There is a wealth of experience and expertise amongst governors which is used very well to support and challenge college leaders and hold them to account. For example, governors have taken an interest in how effectively the college is developing a curriculum to meet the needs of all students and developing additional provision for those students who find it difficult to access education. Governors show a sharp understanding of the college's performance through rigorous and accurate evaluation of examination results, progress data, attendance and exclusion figures, and records relating to the quality of teaching. They know about how the college manages teachers' performance, rewards good teachers and tackles any underperformance. Governors know the college well through a good system of committees that meet regularly to receive reports from college leaders on all aspects of the college's work. They use their training to compare the performance of the college with all schools nationally. Governors support the Principal in securing the efficient management of financial and other resources, including the use of funding through the pupil premium. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory requirements, including those relating to safeguarding and child protection.

## 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

|                                |        |
|--------------------------------|--------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b> | 136612 |
| <b>Local authority</b>         | Devon  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 412856 |

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

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                         | Academy converter                 |
| <b>School category</b>                        | Maintained                        |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                    | 11–18                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                       | Mixed                             |
| <b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>     | Mixed                             |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>    | 2,535                             |
| <b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b> | 430                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>                  | The governing body                |
| <b>Chair</b>                                  | Elizabeth Lee                     |
| <b>Principal</b>                              | Tony Alexander                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>     | Not previously inspected          |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                       | 01395 264761                      |
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