

Conisborough College

Inspection report

Unique reference number	100742
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	376443
Inspection dates	22–23 February 2012
Lead inspector	Samantha Morgan-Price HMI

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	822
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Alethea Dougall
Headteacher	Mr Bob Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 September 2008
School address	Conisborough Crescent Catford London SE6 2SE
Telephone number	0208 461 9600
Fax number	0208 461 9611
Email address	info@cc.lewisham.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Samantha Morgan-Price

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennifer Barker

Additional inspector

Carol Homer

Additional inspector

Brian Lester

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Thirty-nine lessons were observed, and 39 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of students, governors, representatives from the local authority and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at, among other things, the school development plan and self-evaluation document, records of lesson observations, minutes of meetings of the governing body and student exclusion data. The inspection team scrutinised questionnaires completed by 65 parents and carers, 148 pupils and 29 staff.

Information about the school

This is a smaller -than -average school serving a culturally diverse community. A higher -than -average proportion of students are known to be eligible for free school meals. Around a fifth of students are White British, with the other large groups being from Black Caribbean, Black African and Other White backgrounds. Nearly half of the school's roll speaks English as an additional language. A higher-than-average proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at traditional times is higher than the national average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress. Staff and students moved into a new purpose-built building in April 2009, which was funded under the Private Finance Initiative programme. The school also has a small unit for approximately 30 students called the 'Progress Unit' for students predominately with speech, language and communication needs. Through the Department for Education (DfE)'s approval under the Power to Innovate, the school has formalised its partnership with a local independent school.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Conisborough College is a good school where staff and students alike are proud of the achievements that have been made since the last inspection. After several years of small improvements in students' GCSE results, the school's performance rose considerably in 2011, resulting in just under half of Year 11 students attaining five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and mathematics. This improvement is set to be surpassed in 2012, significantly narrowing the gap on national performance.
- Teaching over time is good, although little outstanding teaching was seen during the inspection. However, there is variation in the quality of teaching and a small number of lessons seen were satisfactory. Teaching is well structured and planned with clear objectives. This resulted in students being fully engaged, which enabled them to achieve well in lessons. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers do not plan for students' different needs to pitch learning appropriately or challenge them to move on quickly in their learning. The best marking results in regular, formative comments on how students can improve their performance but this practice is inconsistent.
- The school has worked hard to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent. This has resulted in an increase in students' attendance although it remains average. There are fewer fixed-term exclusions and the use of the internal exclusion unit is enabling the school to work well with students who are finding it difficult to maintain good behaviour in lessons. Students feel safe, and know that they will be listened to, supported and understood on a range of issues, especially bullying.
- Under the passionate and effective leadership of the headteacher, leaders, managers and governors have accelerated the pace of students' achievement. They have worked well to put in place sustainable measures to improve students' outcomes, including behaviour. The revisions to the curriculum to improve students' levels of literacy are not always evaluated to assess their effectiveness. The strengthened partnership with parents and carers is building their reputation as a 'first choice' school in the community. The student council has had good impact on some areas of the school, for example the new school uniform design and electing the school's new name. The formalised partnership

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with the local independent school has given students the opportunity to study at post-16 in an independent school setting.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve students' attainment in their GCSE courses across the school by making the satisfactory teaching consistently good by September 2012 by:
 - teachers planning and delivering lessons that consistently challenge all students to do well, address their needs and allow them to be actively involved in their learning
 - bringing the standard of teachers' marking up to the level of the best, by all teachers providing regular written evaluation of how well students are attaining and the required next steps to improve their performance
 - leaders and managers developing a curriculum that addresses students' literacy needs and monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most students entered the school with standards that are low. However, prior attainment is improving, so that the attainment on entry of current Year 7 students is broadly average. In 2011, students in Year 11 made good progress throughout the school, but with their exceptionally low prior attainment, their attainment remained low although standards are improving. The school's GCSE predictions for 2012 show that attainment is set to improve further, with the proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics predicted to be around the national average. Good support is provided for those students who are falling behind. In 2011, students made good and improved progress in English and mathematics. Students made outstanding progress in languages. Most parents and carers feel their children are making good progress at school; inspectors found this to be the case. In 2011, students requiring school support did not make progress in line with their peers and were underachieving. The school's data indicate that these students are now making faster progress. Overall, disabled students and those with special educational needs are making good progress in line with their peers. Because of the good targeted support, White British students are also making better progress this year.

The vast majority of students enjoy their learning and display a willingness to do well. When teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve, they rise to the challenge and perform extremely well. In an outstanding English lesson, the teacher challenged a group of mixed-ability students extremely well to appreciate the character and language of Lady Macbeth. Students used scanning and skimming techniques to understand the text and to identify key words to express their knowledge of Lady Macbeth's role. In a good mathematics lesson, more-able students had to solve problems independently. They were also encouraged to model

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answers for each other to resolve quadratic equations. The good use of group discussions in some lessons, especially in Years 10 and 11, enables students to share ideas and to solve problems collectively. However, the development of their literacy skills is not always planned for or supported in lessons.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers feel their children are taught well at school and inspectors agree. The majority of teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. This enables teachers to set appropriate tasks and ask probing questions to move students on in their learning. However, in a few lessons teachers have a tendency to talk for too long before students are set off on activities, so limiting their time to complete tasks. Lessons are generally planned well and the curriculum promotes students' development of social, moral, spiritual and cultural skills. In a good sociology lesson, students were encouraged to reflect on their lives and build on their knowledge when asked to explore inequalities in Britain and the stratification of the British society. They were able to develop discussion groups that resulted in good acquisition of knowledge. In a good religious education lesson, students were able to draw effective links with a range of different religions and famous people in the media to develop their knowledge of religion in the media. Teachers do not always take the opportunity to develop students' oracy skills through debate and discussion or provide sufficient opportunities for students to work independently. The curriculum in some lessons does not support the development of students' literacy skills.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students are courteous and well behaved around school and in lessons. The reducing levels of fixed-term exclusions over the last three years reflect students' good and improving behaviour. However, a small minority of students and parents and carers felt that lessons could be disrupted by poor behaviour. Inspectors did not feel this was the case; there were no instances seen of poor behaviour disrupting lessons or learning for others. Students displayed positive attitudes towards their learning, their teacher and towards each other. Students are appreciative of the roles and responsibilities they can achieve, for example as form leaders and school prefects and they take on these roles well. There are good measures to support those few students whose behaviour is sometimes below the high expectations set by the school. Students in the Progress Unit are supported well and their behaviour is good. Most students feel safe around the school and stated that the school deals with poor behaviour effectively. The rare instances of bullying, for example homophobic bullying, were dealt with well by the school. This accords with the views of students, parents and carers.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has established an extended leadership team which contributes effectively to the school's drive to improve students' attainment. Staff share the vision of school improvement well. The new tier of heads of faculty is adding an

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effective extra layer of scrutiny to the work of subject leaders and holding them to account well. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the challenges the school faces and supporting the work of the school well. The much improved GCSE results, the reduction in students who are persistently absent or excluded, along with an accurate self-evaluation and robust external scrutiny by the local authority, enable the school to demonstrate a strong capacity to improve. Leaders are tackling weaker-performing subjects well; most are showing good improvement this year. The arrangements to safeguard the well-being of students are robust and fully meet statutory requirements. The school is closing the gap on attainment of different groups well. White British students, disabled students and those with special educational needs are making improved levels of progress in 2012 and this, along with the robust measures to tackle bullying, demonstrates that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. The curriculum is soundly designed to meet the changing needs of students and promote their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The strong partnership with the local independent school is having a good impact on increasing the continued professional development opportunities for teachers. The school has implemented some good initiatives, such as the 'teaching group' which is a coaching course to enable teachers to develop consistently good or outstanding teaching. The full impact of these measures is yet to be realised.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 February 2012

Dear Students

Inspection of Conisborough College, London SE6 2SE

We would like to thank you for helping us when we came to find out how well you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you. I am writing to let you know what we thought about the school. We judged that your school is good in all respects and that the headteacher, the senior teachers, governing body and other staff are working hard to improve the quality of education you receive.

You achieve well throughout the school. Attainment in the GCSE examinations last year was low but it is improving and is set to improve further this summer. The school has created a harmonious atmosphere and your senior teachers have done really well to achieve this. Your behaviour at school is good and your attendance is average. The majority of you agreed that behaviour was good most of the time in lessons and around the school. We know that you are proud of the responsibilities you undertake, for example as form leaders and prefects. We also know that you have a strong voice on the student council which has influenced the design of the school uniform and the current name of the school.

There are some things that the school can improve upon to help all of you achieve well. These are things we have asked leaders and managers in the school to do.

- Improve your attainment in your GCSE examinations by making the satisfactory teaching consistently good by September 2012 by ensuring that:
 - teachers plan and deliver lessons that consistently challenge you all to do well, address your needs more effectively and allow you to be actively involved in your learning
 - teachers' marking improves to the level of the best, and provides regular written evaluation of how well you are attaining and what you need to do to improve your performance
 - leaders and managers develop a curriculum that addresses your literacy needs and senior teachers monitor and evaluate how well it is working.

All of you can help by attending regularly and contributing to your lessons at all times.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

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