

# Rawlins Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120301
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313579
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Joyce HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	14–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1451
6th form	516
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Lathbury
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Brindley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Loughborough Road Quorn Loughborough LE12 8DY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 622800
<b>Fax number</b>	01509 416668

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<b>Age group</b>	14–19
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Rawlins Community College is a larger than average school which caters for students aged 14 to 19. The number of students with a statement of special educational need is slightly higher than the national level although the total number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has specialist status in media and arts, provides childcare facilities, community access courses, including adult learning, and provides education for a number of post-16 students with moderate learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is valued by students, parents and carers. It provides a satisfactory standard of education that enables students to combine the study of vocational and academic courses in a friendly and supportive environment. Links with other organisations, including feeder high schools, primary schools and the local further education college, are generally good and support the personal development and well-being of students.

Most students enjoy college life and appreciate the positive relationships that exist with staff. The majority behave well and, whilst a minority sometimes disrupt lessons, staff deal with such instances effectively. Students report that they feel safe and that inappropriate behaviour is quickly dealt with. The majority of students have a good attitude towards learning and many contribute well to both the college and local community.

The vast majority of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress and achieve the standards expected based on their prior attainment. A significant number of students appropriately study vocationally related courses and many are successful in gaining GCSE equivalent qualifications whilst developing skills that contribute towards their future economic well-being. However, in a few instances, students on these courses do not gain appropriate accreditation.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory although the quality and consistency of teaching does vary. Teaching in some departments is more motivating, engaging and effective than in others. The curriculum is satisfactory and provides a good range of course options, although some aspects, such as citizenship, lack coordination. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well throughout the curriculum and students are encouraged to eat healthily and take physical exercise. The college's specialist status is having a positive impact on raising achievement in other areas of the curriculum and the use of information and communication technology and e-learning is promoted well.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is a strength within the college and good arrangements are in place to improve attendance and to support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Academic guidance and support are satisfactory although student target setting and feedback is not always sufficiently detailed. It does not adequately involve or engage students to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and managers at all levels are now more accountable for the performance of areas for which they are responsible. Monitoring and evaluation processes have significantly improved and now focus on improving student achievement. However, information collected during monitoring and evaluation is not used to its full potential to effect improvement across the whole college.

The self-evaluation, whilst overestimating some aspects as good, correctly identified overall effectiveness as satisfactory and the main strengths and areas for improvement, identified by inspectors. The college has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the sixth form

### Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. Students reach satisfactory standards overall and achieve as well as expected based on their GCSE performance. Teaching

and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum provides for a suitable range of courses at appropriate levels that meet the needs of students. The STRIDE provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly successful in integrating these students and developing their skills in a well equipped learning environment. Personal development is good and students comment that they enjoy the sixth form. Their good attitudes and behaviour are reflected in their voluntary and charitable activities in both the college and in the community. Care, guidance and support are good and enable students to make informed choices. Leadership and management are satisfactory and promote the sixth form effectively.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching so that all lessons meet the needs of all students, and that all are fully engaged in their learning and make good progress.
- Develop monitoring and evaluation processes at all levels into a programme that is more consistent across the whole college.
- Involve students in the setting and monitoring of their targets to improve engagement, raise aspirations and to improve their progress.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Students enter the school in Year 10 with broadly average levels of attainment. They make satisfactory progress overall and reach standards in public examinations at the end of Year 11 that are broadly in line with national averages. The rate of student progress and the levels of attainment reached improved in 2007 and overall standards have continually improved year on year. In 2007, 62% of students achieved five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE and 50% achieved this threshold including English and mathematics. Many students reach significantly higher standards in subjects such as communication studies and in art and design than they do in other areas of the curriculum.

Student progress in science and in English, which were areas previously causing concern, has now improved and is satisfactory. Progress in most subjects and in most lessons is satisfactory. However, the rate of progress in a minority of lessons, usually where the teaching or the course does not take sufficient account of students' individual learning needs, is too slow.

Achievement and standards in the sixth form are satisfactory. The progress made by students at advanced level does vary between subjects but is satisfactory overall. Pass rates improved significantly on AS level qualifications, although the number of students achieving high grade passes remains below the national average. Achievement rates on vocational qualifications at Level 2 are good with the majority of students gaining merit or distinction grades.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Personal development and well-being including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Students' enjoyment of college and attitudes to their learning are satisfactory. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory following the many strategies put in place to improve it. Behaviour in lessons and during break times is satisfactory. Students are confident that inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with and known instances of bullying are dealt with effectively. Students are aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and this, together with safety awareness, is well promoted through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

Students make a good contribution to both the local and the college community. They feel that they are listened to and their views are valued. They enjoy planning activities to raise money for local, national and international charities and mentoring opportunities are taken seriously. Skills that will contribute towards students' future economic well-being are developed well through a range of work experience opportunities and by the good curriculum provision for vocationally related courses.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The quality of teaching varies across the college and, although there is some good teaching, it is not yet consistently good throughout. Recent efforts to improve teaching and learning are having some impact, but good practice is still not spread widely enough to improve the proportion of good and better lessons. An important strength is the development of e-learning, which is spreading more widely through the positive influence of the college's specialist status.

Typically lessons are planned effectively to meet the learning needs of the majority of students within the group and, as a result, most make satisfactory progress. Classroom management is generally effective, although in a minority of lessons inappropriate behavior is not dealt with soon enough. The most effective lessons fully engage and motivate students and enable them to actively participate in the lesson and to make good progress.

Teachers make regular assessments and students are given targets for improvement in all subjects. However, the quality of marking is variable and in some cases students are not given enough precise advice about what steps they need to take to improve, particularly to gain higher grades.

### Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

The college is making good progress in creating a curriculum that matches more closely the personal learning needs of individual students. There are strong links with the local further education college that enable many students to combine vocational and academic learning successfully. However, a small minority of students on vocational courses do not yet achieve

to their full potential. The curriculum provides a strong emphasis on health and healthy living which are well promoted in the range of extra-curricular activities provided. However, other aspects of the curriculum, such as citizenship and religious education, are not as effective and this limits students' personal development. The college is aware of this and is making appropriate improvements to the personal, social, health and economic education programme. Curriculum provision for media and arts has improved and is now good. The college's specialist status has brought extra facilities that benefit many students. In particular, students make extensive use of the virtual learning environment.

The range of sixth form courses at AS and A2 levels, together with the vocational courses on offer, attract a high proportion of students to the college, including some 10% from out of the area. Students appreciate and enjoy the opportunities they have for extra-curricular activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Care, guidance and support for students are satisfactory in the main college and good in the sixth form. Pastoral support is well led by year directors and enhanced support is well established for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, vulnerable students and students who are not achieving as well as expected. There are good links with support agencies. The college keeps students safe and risk assessments are robust. Procedures for safeguarding students are effective and the quality of care of vulnerable students is good.

Support for academic guidance is satisfactory. Students are set targets to achieve and they are monitored against them. However, because they are not sufficiently involved in determining targets or in reviewing progress, many do not engage with the process and, as a result, do not take responsibility for their own learning. The monitoring of academic progress in the sixth form is more effective and students play a greater role in the process.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. This is having a positive impact on standards and achievement. Targets are used satisfactorily to raise standards, although target setting is not sufficiently detailed in some areas. The restructured senior leadership team understands the college's key areas for improvement, and action plans are in place to address many of these. However, some action plans are not precise enough to aid improvement. Monitoring and evaluation at both senior and departmental level are now focused on raising achievement but the strategies employed are not sufficiently coordinated to ensure consistent improvement across all areas of the college. Governors are increasingly involved in the college and are supportive of it but they are only just beginning to provide adequate challenge. The college makes efficient use of resources, deploys staff appropriately and works hard to overcome difficulties with accommodation. Financial management is good.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3	2
The attendance of learners	3	3
The behaviour of learners	3	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 September 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Rawlins Community College, Quorn, Loughborough, Leicestershire. LE12 8DY

As you know, your college was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the outcome of the inspection. Before I do, I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your cooperation and assistance during our visit. We appreciated your comments and opinions and they helped us form our judgements about your school.

The majority of you told us that you enjoyed school and appreciated the wide and varied curriculum offered including the extensive range of vocational courses available. Many of you commented about the friendly environment and most of you appreciated the support provided by staff who you said treated you with respect.

- We found that your college is satisfactory overall and that it enables the majority of you to learn and make the progress that is expected of you. We did, however, find some areas where the school could further improve to enable you to make better progress and to achieve higher standards. These are:
- To improve the effectiveness of teaching so that you are more motivated and engaged in learning in all of your lessons.
- To improve the coordination of monitoring and evaluation activities within the college so that improvement is more consistent across all areas.
- To involve you more in the setting and monitoring of your targets.

You can help the school staff by cooperating with your teachers and by concentrating and working hard in all of your lessons. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Joyce Her Majesty's Inspector

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