

Selston Arts and Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122857
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	359318
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2011
Reporting inspector	James McNeillie HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	759
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Betty Dixon
Headteacher	Dianne Stendall
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 30 lessons taught by 30 teachers and held meetings with members of staff, students and governors. They observed the college's work and looked at a range of documentation such as its development plan, analysis of students' current and predicted attainment and departmental reviews. Inspectors also looked at 229 parental questionnaires, a sample from students and 39 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is the quality of teaching consistently and sufficiently challenging?
- Is the provision for pupils with special educational needs/and or disabilities, adequate to ensure sufficient progress for these pupils?
- How well do leaders and managers at all levels use a range of monitoring evidence to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils?

Information about the school

Selston Arts and Community College is a smaller than average secondary school and has been a specialist arts college since September 2006. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the overall proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are very few students from minority ethnic backgrounds or students who speak English as an additional language. The college has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, a silver Artsmark and International Schools status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

'Strong leadership and children are allowed to develop as individuals.' This comment from one parent encapsulates some of the strengths and ethos of Selston Arts and Community College.

Students' attainment has been increasing since the previous inspection and is average. All students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make expected progress given their starting points. As a result, the proportion of students achieving five good GCSE qualifications including English and mathematics is now at the national average. The results of examinations already taken and the college's rigorous tracking systems indicate that current Year 11 attainment in English and mathematics is set to surpass that of 2010.

The college's level of care and support for all students is outstanding. This was confirmed in discussions with inspectors when one vulnerable student said about teaching and support staff, 'Without them, I'd be nowhere.' Students are proud of their college and attend well. They are regularly consulted about their views and as a result are able to influence many aspects of school life. For example, students' views on the carousel approach to the teaching of English at GCSE have resulted in this being adapted further. Most aspects of students' personal development and well-being are good, and their contribution to the school and community is outstanding.

Though teaching is satisfactory, there are examples of good and very good practice across a range of subjects. However, the quality of teaching is too variable. Where progress in lessons is less than good, the needs of each individual student are not consistently being met through the range of learning activities. Teachers do not regularly assess the quality of students' learning and so are not able to adjust their teaching when necessary. Another weakness is the quality of teachers' questioning in lessons. College leaders had already identified this issue and have begun to support teachers to develop.

The college's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Leaders at all levels share the well-respected headteacher's determination to raise standards, improve the life chances of all students and bring benefit to the school and wider community. Leaders know the college well because of rigorous self-evaluation. They have identified its weaknesses and are already tackling inconsistencies in the overall quality of teaching and variations between subjects. The impact of their strategic approach can be seen in the significant improvements since the last inspection. Not all improvement strategies have yet had a full impact. This means the quality of teaching and assessment to support learning and students' overall achievement remain satisfactory. Nevertheless, achievement is rising and the quality of teaching and assessment are improving. Leadership at all levels is good.

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Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of all students by ensuring that:
 - work they are set is well matched to the needs of each individual
 - lessons consistently challenge students and result in at least good learning and progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - during lessons, teachers regularly assess the quality of students' learning and take prompt action to adjust teaching and learning approaches where appropriate
 - the quality of teachers' questioning is improved in order to extend and deepen students' understanding and learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Students' attainment is rising. Many key indicators of attainment are at the national average, including attainment in the school's specialist subjects. Some, for example the proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs and two good GCSEs or equivalent in science, are exceeding the average. Almost all students leave with at least one GCSE or equivalent qualification, demonstrating the inclusive nature of the college. There has been a sharp rise in the proportion of students achieving good grades in GCSE mathematics. Students' attainment in English is rising but remains below the national average.

Students of all groups make expected progress given their starting points. However, there has been variability in their progress over time. Their current progress, as seen in lessons is also variable. Teaching is not yet good enough to ensure that students make consistently good progress. In 2010 some students with special educational needs and/or disabilities made less than expected progress. However, results from examinations already taken and the school's detailed tracking systems indicate their achievement is now satisfactory.

In lessons where students make the most progress, teachers' planning ensures that there is a range of activities to engage and motivate students. In these lessons students are also expected to take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a GCSE history lesson students worked together to develop their knowledge of the role of women from a range of print and media texts. The pace of learning drops in lessons where activities are not sufficiently challenging for some or all abilities.

Participating in surveys and the college council, raising money for charities, joining the selection process for new teachers, promoting a safer neighbourhood and showcasing the heritage of the area through performance are just a flavour of the extensive contribution students make to the school and wider community. Many of these examples also support their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. As well as enjoying their time at Selston, students say they feel safe and the college supports them in staying safe. An example of this is in the way students develop their good understanding of how to protect

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themselves when using new forms of communication. The few incidents of bullying or harassment that take place are dealt with quickly and effectively. Students behave well in lessons and around the college and take pride in the many high quality displays of their work. Enjoying college and feeling safe have contributed to students' high attendance. Students aspire to succeed, and have a good understanding of how to do so. Most students have an understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles, and many take part in extra-curricular activities that support this. They do not, however, always act on this knowledge.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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 contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is not consistently securing good learning and progress. Although good teaching takes place, too much is still satisfactory and slows the rate of progress students make in their learning. When the progress of students is not good enough it is as a result of weak planning for the full range of abilities within a class and missed opportunities to assess and extend students' learning. In the very best lessons, teachers' strong subject knowledge and skilful use of questioning challenge students' thinking and deepen their understanding. These teachers also adapt their plans as a result of gaps in students' skills identified during lessons. However, this good practice is not spread across all teaching. Students have good attitudes to learning and strong relationships exist between them and their teachers. Teachers' behaviour management is effective when it needs to be. Marking

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of students' written work makes clear reference to assessment criteria and provides comments for improvement.

The college has developed an imaginative Key Stage 4 curriculum, with good impact from its specialism, that allows all students access to a broad range of appropriate qualifications. Flexible alternative curriculum provision allows potentially disaffected students to continue with some core subjects, take up work-based learning outside the college and undertake well-resourced and expertly staffed personal development courses. The impact of this can be seen in the comment made by one student who had been in danger of exclusion but is now making clear progress towards appropriate qualifications, 'Being able to come to ASDAN classes makes sure I behave better in my other classes.' Cross curricular provision for literacy and numeracy is variable but provision for information and communication technology across the curriculum is securely good. The college's new curriculum approach is at an early stage of development and so has not had time to have a full impact on achievement.

The care, guidance and support given to students are outstanding. Effective staff development, leadership restructuring and the good partnership working with a range of external agencies have resulted in significant improvements since the previous inspection. The college rightly prides itself on knowing students as individuals and catering for their needs. This is evident in the approach taken to support students need further support with skills development when they join the college and follow the 'gold curriculum'. Other striking examples are of the students at risk of not being in education, employment or training who are supported to gain productive and rewarding employment in local businesses. Students speak very highly of the support they receive. Some can give precise examples of how, as a result of mentoring support, they had raised their aspirations.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The college's vision and determination to achieve excellence for all is clearly articulated by the head teacher and all leaders. This is seen in the college's self-evaluation, development planning and accountability structures. Rigorous quality assurance of all aspects of the college's provision, for example through consistently detailed departmental reviews, means that leaders at all levels know the strengths and weaknesses very well. Similarly, the senior leadership of teaching and learning is strong. The impact can be seen in the improving quality of teaching which is contributing to students' improving achievement. The full impact of recent developments and stronger subject leadership has not had time to ensure that the vast majority of teaching is consistently good.

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The excellent programme of giving aspiring senior leaders further leadership experience supports the college in embedding ambition and in planning for its future. College leaders have astutely linked this development opportunity with the next steps they want to take, for example in evaluating in more detail the uptake of extra- curricular activities.

The college's inclusive ethos encourages equality of opportunity. Recent actions taken by leaders mean that gaps in the provision and outcomes for students are closing. For example, there is no longer a gender imbalance in the students opting to study drama. This is because the curriculum was altered to include units that have appealed more to boys. The comparatively high rate of exclusion for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities in 2010 has reduced in this current academic year.

Governance is good. Governors attend parents and carers' meetings to discuss any issues and this is one way in which they effectively support and hold college leaders to account. The college communicates with parents and carers in a wide and innovative range of ways, including a 'comment box' option available on its website. Despite these good efforts there are still some parents and carers not heavily involved in college life.

Good management systems and staff training are in place to ensure the safety of students. The college knows its context well and is at the heart of the local community. The impact of its work, including the significant contribution of its specialist arts status, is felt strongly within the local community. One parent commented that the school is 'a credit to the community.' The college is reaching beyond its local area, for example with links to a school in Malawi.

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	2
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	3

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned by parents and carers is almost double that of the average. A very large majority of responses identified that parents and carers are happy with their children's experience and that the college meets their children's particular needs. This matches inspection evidence. A very small minority raised concerns about the way in which the college deals with unacceptable behaviour. Evidence from the inspection indicates that on the limited occasions when unacceptable behaviour occurred, college staff manages this effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Selston Arts and Community 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 229 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 759 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	33	136	59	17	7	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	32	138	60	10	4	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	107	47	106	46	13	6	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	78	34	131	57	15	7	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	28	147	64	12	5	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	24	138	60	27	12	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	20	143	62	29	13	3	1
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)	54	24	139	61	14	6	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	27	148	65	13	6	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	24	127	55	25	11	10	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	16	139	61	28	12	9	4
The school is led and managed effectively	55	24	150	66	10	4	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	80	35	134	59	12	5	2	1

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. 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.

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.



3 February 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Selston Arts and Community College, Nottingham, NG16 6BW

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your college recently and spoke to some of you in lessons, at lunchtime and during break.

We were impressed with the excellent ways in which you get involved in college life, such as regularly giving your views on the quality of the education you receive and taking part in extra-curricular activities. You can help improve the college further by continuing to do this. We were pleased with how well you behaved in lessons and the pride you take in your school environment. Your attendance at college has improved a great deal since the last time inspectors visited - well done! You told us that you feel safe at college, that teachers and other adults give you very good support and that you think Mrs Stendall and her team are doing a good job. We agree with you. We also decided that the college prepares you well for the next stage of your lives. You are given good advice about what it means to have a healthy and happy lifestyle, although not all of you follow this advice.

The examination results at your college are improving and the progress that you make is what we would expect. Teachers want to do the very best for you. Much teaching is good and we have asked the headteacher to make certain that all teaching is as good as the best by ensuring that:

- the work you are given to do matches the way you need to learn and really stretches you to the best of your ability
- the questions teachers ask you in lessons make you think more carefully
- teachers regularly check what you are learning in lessons and make changes if you do not understand or if you are finding the learning too easy.

We wish you well at this supportive and improving college.

Yours sincerely

James McNeillie

Her Majesty's Inspector

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