

# Sawtry Community College

Fen Lane, Sawtry, Huntingdon, PE28 5TQ

## Inspection dates

6–7 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress in English is not as good as it is in mathematics or science. Progress across other subjects is also uneven.
- Not enough teaching at the school is good or outstanding because work is not always sufficiently matched to students' abilities.
- Teachers' marking does not always offer students enough guidance about how they could improve.
- Procedures for dealing with the small minority of students who disrupt the learning of others are not fully understood or followed by all teachers.
- Subject leaders do not share effective teaching methods with their staff sufficiently.
- The school's leadership and management require improvement because they have not made teaching good enough to ensure that students achieve as highly as they should.

### The school has the following strengths

- The progress made by students in mathematics and science is well above national expectations.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well across a wide range of subjects.
- Most teachers use questioning well to help students to think problems out for themselves.
- Students feel safe and the behaviour of the vast majority of students is good.
- The school's use of additional provision in other establishments in Years 10 and 11 ensures that students who take vocational learning courses have good opportunities to gain relevant qualifications.
- The school's work in developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its students is helping make them well-rounded and confident young adults.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 45 lessons. Two of these were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work in books was scrutinised.
- Records and logs about pupils' safety, attendance and behaviour were examined.
- Information and data about the performance of pupils in public examinations and work completed in the classroom were analysed.
- School improvement plans, the minutes of governors' meetings, the school's monitoring records and self-evaluation documents were considered.
- Inspectors listened to the views of pupils, staff, parents and carers, 87 of whom responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and some of whom contacted the inspection team by letter or email. They held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, the Vice-Chair, school leaders and support staff.
- The school's partners in providing alternative provision were also contacted and records about the alternative provision were analysed.

## Inspection team

James McAtear, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Heather Housden	Additional Inspector
Alan Lee	Additional Inspector
David Talbot	Additional Inspector
Louise Lee	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Sawtry Community College is an above average size secondary school which includes a sixth form.
- Sawtry became an academy in 1 August 2011. When its predecessor school, Sawtry Community College, was last inspected it was judged to be satisfactory. The school has specialist status in mathematics and computing.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of students who are of minority ethnic heritage or who speak English as an additional language is well below that found nationally.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below average.
- The proportion of students supported at school action, action plus and who have a statement of special educational needs are broadly average.
- The school does not make use of early entry for GCSE examinations. However, it does make some use of alternative provision for the education of its students at Huntingdonshire Regional College.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Increase the proportion of teaching which is good or outstanding by ensuring that:
  - all teachers plan work at the correct level of difficulty for all students
  - marking is detailed and regular enough for students to know exactly what they have to do to improve their work
  - students get more opportunities to work by themselves so that they become less dependent on their teachers for help and guidance.
- Increase the rate of progress students make, particularly in English, so that it matches that of other subjects by ensuring that:
  - teachers in English share their best ideas about how to teach students in Years 10 and 11
  - all teachers in the sixth form make good use of the tracking and assessment process and ensure that support for those who may have fallen behind are more effective in helping them to catch up.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - senior and subject leaders provide teachers with clear guidance on how to help students of all abilities make consistently rapid rates of progress in all subjects, and ensure that all teachers make use of this
  - procedures for dealing with students who disrupt the learning of others are clear to the whole school community and used consistently by all staff.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Students arrive at the school at levels that are broadly average. During their time at the school, test results and work in students' books show most match and some exceed expected levels of progress in mathematics. However, students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Although rates of progress in English are improving, they do not match those made in other key subjects such as science and mathematics.
- Rates of progress for students currently on roll in a wide range of subjects are improving and usually meet and sometimes exceed those nationally expected. Pupils make good progress, for example, in art and design. In 2012, 65% of students achieved five A\* to C GCSEs including English and mathematics, which was above the national average.
- The progress made by disabled students and those who have special educational needs is in line with other students in the school in almost all subjects.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is improving. Leaders have used this funding effectively to provide additional help and support with access to computing facilities to make sure that students who qualify for this are well supported. The gap in attainment compared with other pupils is closing.
- Progress made by students who make use of alternative provision is good. Communication between the school and Huntingdonshire College is effective in making sure that those students achieve well in relation to their starting points.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good overall. It is particularly strong in art and design. However, there is some variability in students' performance in different subjects.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching has a number of strengths and is improving. However, overall it requires improvement as not enough students make consistently good progress in all subjects.
- Teaching assistants and other adults generally make a good contribution to students' learning. They know the needs of their students very well. In lessons where achievement is at its highest, for example in mathematics, students' understanding is carefully checked and teaching is adapted to make sure that students learn well. This is not always the case, however, and there are times when the help of other adults is not put to its best use because teachers do not share their planning with them sufficiently.
- Teachers do not always plan well for the different needs of students. As a result, work is not always set at the correct levels for all members of each class. In these cases, teaching does not always have as positive an impact as it should on students' learning.
- Not all teachers manage effectively the behaviour of the small minority of students who are sometimes responsible for low-level disruption in a small number of lessons.

- When marking is at its best, students are helped to see clearly and on a regular basis precisely what to do to improve the standard of their work. In many cases, however, marking is not regular enough and contains insufficient detail to allow students to see what the next steps are in improving their work.
- Students enjoy learning most when they are given the opportunity to apply what they are learning and when they are not encouraged to be too dependent on teachers' guidance. However, in some lessons, teachers take too much control of the learning and leave little room for students to think for themselves.
- In the best teaching, the guidance that students receive helps them to develop secure knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are able to correct students' errors without slowing down their progress in learning. These teachers plan lessons in which questions are consistently well used to extend knowledge and understanding. For example, in one mathematics lesson, students examined the claims made about a new medicine and were asked, 'How reliable are the statistics which say this medicine works?' Students appreciate these lessons and many say they enjoy their learning as a result.
- The majority of teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are generally good and lessons are interesting and motivating. However, not all staff consistently make good use of the school's tracking data to ensure that their support for individual students is as relevant as it needs to be.

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

- School records and the comments of pupils indicate the good standards of behaviour seen during the inspection are typical of what the school is normally like. Many teachers manage behaviour skilfully and maintain positive relationships. The responses on Parent View, the online survey form used by Ofsted, indicate that parents feel pupils are safe in school.
- Pupils say they feel safe at the school and that the atmosphere is positive in all year groups. Pupils find teachers and other adults approachable and state that they understand how to keep themselves safe from dangers such as those sometimes posed by use of the internet.
- Students cooperate well with each other during lessons and older students work well with younger ones in tutor groups. They also behave well during social time and when they move through corridors and around the school. They are welcoming to visitors and are articulate in expressing well thought-out points of view.
- Bullying of any kind is rare. When it does happen, it is dealt with well by staff. The school's records indicate that racist incidents are very rare and that the school deals with such incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils say they have confidence that their teachers and other adults in the school will support them if they need help. They have a good understanding of the dangers of different forms of bullying, including bullying through the internet, and they understand how to get help in situations they find difficult.
- The school seldom excludes students. The school works well with agencies set up to help students and their families to improve behaviour over time. It works particularly well in partnership with Huntingdonshire College to make sure that many students who receive alternative provision are learning in a way that prepares them well for future employment.

- The school has worked closely with parents over time to improve attendance. As a result of this, rates of attendance are now close to the national average.
- A small minority of students cause low-level disruption in a small number of lessons. Teaching staff are not always clear how the school's leadership addresses these issues and some staff do not know of or consistently follow the school's policies when managing such situations.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- Leadership at all levels requires improvement because, whilst the school does a number of things well, it does not offer consistently good teaching and therefore students do not achieve as well as they ought to in all subjects.
- Leaders ensure that there is a close link between teachers' performance and salary progression. However, they do not ensure that subject leaders share the most effective teaching methods with their staff sufficiently or insist that all staff give pupils the guidance they need to improve or manage their behaviour effectively enough.
- The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its students. Opportunities for creativity are well planned for in subjects such as art and design and music.
- The school makes good use of its specialist status in mathematics and ICT to help students achieve highly in these subjects. Courses are made more interesting as a result of the many trips and opportunities that the school provides for students.
- The overwhelming majority of the school's parents, carers and students speak well of the school's work. The school's work with external agencies is particularly successful in helping individual pupils and their families.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.
- The school is well supported by its Academy Trust.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors provide strong support for the work of the school. They know the school very well and the decisions they make reflect a detailed understanding of its needs. They are very aware of the use of pupil premium funding and ensure that this is used for the purpose for which it is intended. They are aware of the gap between the performance of students eligible for this funding and others, and they carefully assess the impact of measures to close this gap. Governors analyse reports that give detailed information about the school's performance and know how it compares with other schools. For example, they are aware of the high performance of the mathematics department at GCSE and that rates of progress in English are not as rapid. Governors are aware of the developmental needs of teaching staff and of the relative strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They closely monitor the school's plans to improve this. They ensure that salary progression is linked to performance.

## 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>	136974
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406652

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<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>	1348
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Leaton
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Stewart
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Telephone number</b>	01487 830701
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