

Castle Donington College

Mount Pleasant, Castle Donington, Derby, DE74 2LN

Inspection dates 17–18 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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

- Although the school is improving, the proportion of students making expected levels of progress is still too low.
- Work is not always set at the right level for the different abilities of students to make sure that they are all sufficiently stretched.
- The standard of teaching in the school is not consistently good or outstanding. As a result, too few students make the progress they should.
- Questioning is not always probing enough to make students think and to extend their learning.
- The teaching of mathematics in Year 6 does not build sufficiently on students' previous experiences at their primary schools.
- Plans devised by school leaders do not rely enough on evidence from lesson observations to improve teaching and are not sufficiently detailed to bring about good progress.
- Governors have not made sure that the school's systems for managing the performance of teachers are sufficiently robust. As a result, school leaders and governors have not yet made sufficient impact on the quality of teaching to ensure that students make consistently good or outstanding progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Students behave well in the school. They are respectful, show courtesy and good manners and mix well together.
- Staff at the school are a cohesive team who share a high level of commitment to the welfare of the students and who provide high standards of pastoral care.
- The school makes effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 30 lessons. Two of these were joint observations, one with the acting principal and one with an assistant principal.
- Inspectors examined pupils' workbooks, records and logs about pupils' safety, attendance and behaviour, and information about the performance of pupils in national tests.
- The minutes of governors' meetings, reports made by educational consultants and the school's improvement plans were considered.
- The inspectors listened to the views of pupils and staff.
- The views of the 51 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, along with the views of those who spoke to the inspectors during the inspection, or from whom they received correspondence.
- The inspectors held discussions with the Chair and other representatives of the Governing Body, school leaders, and other members of the teaching and support staff.

Inspection team

James McAtear, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Anne McAvan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Castle Donington College is an average-sized middle school deemed secondary.
- Pupils are taught in four-year groups. There are five forms of entry in years eight and nine and four forms in years six and seven.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides funding for children in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average whilst the proportion receiving support at school action plus and those who have a statement of special educational needs, is well below average.
- At the time of the inspection the school was led by the acting principal who also continues to serve as vice principal.
- There are no pupils who are educated in alternative provision away from the school.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum level expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Castle Donington College converted to become an academy school on 1 October 2012. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of teaching that is good and outstanding by making sure that:
 - all teachers plan lessons in which work is set at the correct levels to stretch and challenge students of all levels of ability
 - all teachers use questioning and promote high quality discussions which deepen students' understanding of what they are learning.
- Insist that pupils make expected progress more consistently in all year groups by making sure that:
 - the teaching of mathematics during Year 6 builds more effectively on the methods of learning used in partner primary schools in a way which is consistent between primary and secondary school.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that:
 - the information gained from checking the quality of lessons is used more robustly in school improvement plans to focus more on planning actions which will improve teaching and boost students' progress
 - governors satisfy themselves that arrangements for managing teachers' performance are sufficiently robust
 - governors are well enough informed about the progress of students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students join the school at the beginning of Year 6 with prior attainment from Key Stage 1 that is above average. By the time they reach year 6 they have made less progress than expected. They spend one year of Key Stage 2 at Castle Donington College and the previous three years at a variety of primary schools.
- The progress made during Year 6 is not good. The levels of progress made by students is better in Year 9 but overall during Key Stage 3 progress requires improvement because it is not good. As progress is uneven students do not make good progress throughout their time in school. This is partly because the methods used to teach, for example, mathematics, do not always build on those with which students have become familiar in primary school.
- The progress made by students across a wide range of subjects is variable. Rates of progress generally tend to increase as students reach the end of Key Stage 3. School improvement plans do not always focus specifically on improving areas where achievement is not good.
- The school does not enter any Year 9 pupils early for GCSE.
- The school is effective in helping students of all ages to improve the standard of their reading. They are well supported in this by the local community and many volunteers work in an effective partnership with the school showing notable commitment to making sure all are helped to read at a suitable level for their age. Support for this continues until all can read fluently irrespective of the year group of the student.
- The gap between the progress made by students for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and those who do not is not narrowing. In English this is remaining static. Those receiving this funding were 19 months behind other students by the end of Key Stage 3 in both 2011 and 2012. Those in mathematics were two years behind in 2012 and 20 months behind in 2011.
- Students who are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium, which is for students who did not achieve level 4 in English at the end of Key Stage 2, make good progress as a result of the school's work to improve standards of reading in Year 7.
- The progress made by those who have special educational needs is not consistently good, although this is improving rapidly in mathematics. This is because teachers are providing effective help at an individual level to make sure that all students understand clearly what to do to improve their work in mathematics further.
- Work in pupils' books and information held by the school show that pupils currently in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 are making more rapid progress than pupils in previous years. This is because the quality of feedback students receive is improving and the teaching in some subjects, like mathematics, is also improving.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Not enough teaching is good or outstanding. This is because systems for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching require improvement. The information gained from monitoring

the quality of lessons is not well enough used in school improvement plans. These are not, therefore, sufficiently focused on areas of teaching that require improvement. As a result the training provided to teachers does not focus consistently enough on those areas that most need to be improved.

- Teachers do not always plan well enough to use questioning and promote the highest quality of discussion that will deepen students' learning. This means that opportunities for students to clarify their understanding and think through what they are learning for themselves are sometimes missed.
- Teaching in some subjects, for example in mathematics, does not always build on the way students have been taught during the primary phase of their education. In some cases this has limited the progress made by students. The school is beginning to address this issue.
- Where work is set at the right levels for students of all abilities progress is good, but this is too rarely the case. Teachers do not always plan well enough to challenge and stretch students to produce their best work.
- Marking in students' books, folders and worksheets is regular and positive. Students are encouraged to produce their best work. In many cases clear next steps to improve the quality of work is given but in a very few cases marking is too limited to ticking students' comments and does not provide enough detail to show students how to improve. Students recognise the hard work their teachers do in providing this guidance.
- The use of other adults who assist the teachers is well planned for. They are effective in working with students who require additional help because they provide help which is well suited to students as individuals. For example, pupils who may struggle with reading are given support in very small groups or individually. A partnership with volunteers from the local community is also effective in achieving this. As a result, students read widely and often and are able to cope well with the reading required to help them learn in a range of subjects throughout their time at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students behave well during lessons. They are attentive to their teachers and want to be involved in lesson activities, treating their teachers and one another with respect. Students move around the school safely and during social times they mix well with each other. As a result, the ethos of the school is positive and the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming.
- Parents agree that behaviour is good in the school and feel their children are safe when in school. Students say that behaviour overall is good. They feel cared for by their teachers and other adults in the school. For example, one student said, 'This is a friendly, caring school.' They feel safe and are generally positive about school.
- Attendance is rigorously tracked and punctuality is not an issue. It is above average. The school is effective in raising the attendance of those whose absence is greater. For example, the school is notably successful in reducing the proportion of persistently absent students to what is now a very small number.
- The evidence contained in school records and logs which relate to school discipline show that poor behaviour is rare. Students are sensitive to one another. They say they feel free from bullying and that if incidents do occur they have confidence that these will be dealt with quickly

and effectively by their teachers and other adults who help them. They have a good understanding of the variety of forms bullying can take including racial and homophobic bullying. Exclusions are a very rare event. Staff agree that behaviour is good in the school.

- Students are taught about a range of risks. For example, they are aware of dangers relating to fire, water and those to be found in using the internet. They know how to get help if they feel in danger and how to avoid dangerous situations.
- Attitudes in lessons and around the college are very positive. A very small amount of disruption sometimes occurs when the teaching lacks pace. Suitable systems follow up any disruption well. Students contribute well to the life of the school. For example, they get involved when the school raises money for good causes and contribute their ideas in forums like the school council. Good communication with home means that parents are kept well informed of any behavioural concerns.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership requires improvement because the plans made by the school to improve progress and teaching do not focus enough on the areas that are not yet good. For example, plans do not focus enough on areas where the achievement of students is not consistently good in enough detail and they do not focus on weaker areas of teaching like setting work at the right level and the use of questioning.
- The systems used to monitor the quality of teachers' work are not always rigorous enough. For example, too few lessons are observed to give a clear enough picture of teachers' performance in the classroom and where lesson quality is more closely monitored the information used from it is not always put to its best use to improve the rates of progress made by students.
- The performance of teaching staff is not always carefully linked to salary progression. Although targets set for staff are rigorous enough, those areas for improvement that come to light during performance management discussions are not always followed up with action to improve the performance of staff.
- The school's leadership tracks the progress of students well and is able to use this information to intervene when students are falling behind and get them back on track with their learning.
- The school provides a well-planned range of subjects and topics. For example, it includes specific days based around a broad range of themes such as financial well-being. Students appreciate the range of topics they are able to learn about and enjoy the variety.
- The school makes effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of the pupils. Activities include a range of theatre trips and visits to key cultural sites, an exchange visit with a Swedish school and a visit to the 'galleries of justice' among many others. It builds well on these during lessons to engage the interest of its students.
- The school's leadership ensures that equality of opportunity is available to all because it tracks the performance of students and intervenes to assist those who have fallen behind. This means that no groups of students are discriminated against, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs.
- The school makes some use of external support, for example in working to improve the attendance of its students, something that is having a beneficial effect on rates of attendance.

- The school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe, for example, in providing adequate staff training in child protection, meet regulatory requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors do not evaluate the impact of the use of pupil premium funding well enough. They are not fully aware about the performance of the school and how it compares with other similar schools. Governors know that systems to improve the performance of teachers are not yet robust enough but have not yet secured enough improvement. Governors do not have enough knowledge about the quality of teaching to make sure that it is consistently good or outstanding. They are not clear about how the school rewards good teaching and tackles any underperformance. Governors are highly committed to the welfare of the school's staff and students and are increasingly fulfilling a more active role in informing the strategic direction of the school.

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

Unique reference number	138820
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	418374

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

Type of school	Academy Converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	10–14
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	464
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kate Henry
Headteacher	Kenneth Bayliss
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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