

Melbourn Village College

The Moor, Melbourn, Royston, SG8 6EF

Inspection dates 21–22 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress based on their average starting points. More-able students achieve particularly well across a range of subjects.
- The gap in attainment between those students entitled to pupil premium and other groups of students is steadily narrowing. Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well, compared to similar students nationally.
- Most of the teaching is good, and a small proportion is outstanding. Teachers' marking is usually very helpful in moving students' attainment up to the next level.
- Students behave well in lessons and around the college. The vast majority of students feel safe. The college's good partnerships with other agencies make sure all students make positive gains in their learning.
- The Principal, two Assistant Principals and the committed governing body have a good understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development. They monitor students' achievement and the quality of teaching closely. Consequently, this is a college that continues to improve.
- The performing arts specialism makes a significant contribution to college life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching still requires improvement because some teachers are not matching the work in lessons precisely enough to the capabilities of all students.
- The frequency of marking of students' work is not yet consistent. Although teachers' comments are usually helpful in raising standards, students do not respond to these regularly.
- The role of teaching assistants is not yet maximised in the classroom because they are not given enough opportunities to liaise with teachers in advance of the lessons.
- Opportunities are missed to share some of the existing excellent practice between different subject areas.
- Attendance remains below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors saw 29 parts of lessons taught by 27 teachers. In addition, inspectors visited a number of lessons briefly, accompanied by senior members of staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).
- Meetings took place with the Principal and Assistant Principals, heads of subject areas, groups of students and three members of the governing body. Inspectors looked at a wide range of college documentation, including self-evaluation documentation, the college's information on students' current progress, policies and records on the quality of teaching. They also examined the college's central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- Although inspectors observed teaching of every year group, there was a greater focus on Years 7 to 10, as Year 11 had already started their GCSE examinations. However, inspectors analysed the college's data on achievement for the current Year 11 in depth.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents and carers, 77 of whom responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the views of staff by considering 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Daniell, Lead inspector

Jennifer Barker

Simon Hughes

Her Majesty's Inspector

Additional Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The college is smaller than the average-sized secondary school and has a specialism in performing arts.
- Melbourn Village College converted to become an academy school in October 2011. When its predecessor school, which went by the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority and for students known to be eligible for free school meals, is well below the national average.
- The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- A very small proportion of students are from minority ethnic groups and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The college's 'Blue Room' and 'Reflection Room' were set up specifically to support students who display challenging behaviour, and who are at risk of being excluded from the college. The 'Blue Room' now supports students who are unable to follow a normal timetable for a variety of reasons.
- Two students in Year 8 currently attend a Learner Centre in Cambridge which works with students who are being bullied. A small number of students in Year 10 do work experience on a regular basis in addition to studying at the college.
- At the time of the inspection, Melbourn Village College published plans to join the Comberton Academy Trust from September 2013.
- The college meets the government's floor standard which sets the minimum levels expected for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring every teacher uses the information provided on students' current and potential achievement to plan work that is tailored closely to the capabilities of all students in the class
 - making sure that all teachers mark students' work regularly and encourage students to respond to their comments for improvement
 - sharing the excellent practice which already exists in the college with all teachers across every subject area
 - setting up effective arrangements for teaching assistants to liaise with subject teachers in advance of lessons.
- Revise the school's attendance policy and use this more effectively to raise students' attendance to be at least in line with the national average by May 2014.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students achieve well in the college over time. From their broadly average starting points they make good progress. The most-able students achieve particularly well and a significant proportion of them achieve the top GCSE grades compared to similar students nationally. This is because they are usually given work that challenges them especially well.
- Students' achievement is stronger in English than in mathematics, but evidence gathered by the inspection team shows that progress made in mathematics is accelerating.
- The majority of parents and carers rightly believe that their children are making good progress. Most groups in the college achieve better than similar groups nationally. The very few students entitled to pupil premium achieve higher standards in English and mathematics compared to similar students nationally. In 2012, their results in GCSE English and mathematics were, on average, a grade lower than the rest of their year group. In 2012, of the six students eligible for pupil premium, two achieved expected progress in English and four in mathematics based on their starting points.
- Current assessment information and other inspection evidence indicate that the gap between the attainment of students known to be eligible for free school meals and that of other students is narrowing steadily.
- Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve higher than similar students nationally and although they achieve less well than other groups in the college, the gap is steadily narrowing. The few students with a statement of special educational needs make notable progress because of the specialist support they receive.
- Students from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other students in the college.
- As a result of good teaching, effective leadership and well-targeted support, gaps in attainment between different groups of students are being narrowed. This is due to the college's drive in promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relationships and tackling discrimination.
- The development of students' literacy skills has been a priority for the college, and college leaders have rightly targeted those students with weaker literacy by creating additional time in the school timetable. Most students make good use of their reading and writing skills across different subjects to support their learning. Students told inspectors they enjoy reading. Mathematical skills are being developed well across a range of subjects.

The quality of teaching is good

- Students mostly experience good teaching in the college. A small proportion of teaching is outstanding. Equally, a small proportion of teaching requires improvement.
- Good teaching is typically characterised by teachers demonstrating a secure understanding of what students are capable of achieving through their planning of the lesson. Effective questioning pitched at the right level for each student tells the teachers whether or not students have understood the work.

- In an effective Year 7 art lesson based on observational drawings using watercolours, the teacher demonstrated a good understanding of individual students' needs by the skilful matching of appropriate activities. The teacher checked for progress throughout the session, and engaged all students by maintaining a quick pace. Students whose behaviour was potentially challenging responded well to positive comments and produced some good work. Every student made progress during the lesson.
- Where teaching requires improvement, quite often all students are expected to do the same work. This means that more-able students' progress is stalled, and those who require extra support struggle to make enough progress. However, teachers are better at planning lessons which target the most-able students, which is why they achieve more A* and A grades at GCSE than the national average and across a wide range of subjects.
- The college's marking policy is generally applied well. Marking is regular and identifies what students do well and what they can do to improve. However, a few teachers do not mark as regularly as the rest. Students told inspectors they find teachers' marking helpful, but are not systematically encouraged or required by their teachers to respond in some way to these comments.
- Additional adults in the classroom, for example teaching assistants, support students adequately in staying on task and working towards achieving their targets. The impact of their work is, however, limited by lack of closer liaison with the classroom teacher in advance of the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students typically behave well both in lessons and around the college. They respond positively in lessons when teachers plan lessons that match their individual capabilities. On a few occasions, when teaching requires improvement, some students tend to lose interest in what is being taught, although they do not disrupt the learning of others.
- Students told inspectors that bullying does sometimes occur in the college. They are taught how to identify the different forms bullying can take, and are confident that it will be dealt with by members of staff. Reported incidents are usually dealt with in a timely fashion and the majority of parents and carers believe the college deals effectively with incidents that are reported.
- There have been no permanent exclusions for a number of years. The proportion of fixed-term exclusions has reduced, and is below the national average. This is largely due to increased expectations of how students should behave in the college, and a revised classroom behaviour strategy. Most teachers implement this strategy consistently.
- The 'Blue Room' and 'Reflection Room' provision make a significant contribution to the welfare and educational outcomes of low-attaining students and those who display challenging behaviour. In the 'Blue Room' students benefit from valuable one-to-one mentoring sessions, and inspectors' analysis of case studies shows that the introduction of these two facilities has helped to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions.
- Attendance is a key priority in the college improvement plan. It has not yet reached the national average, and aspects of the current attendance policy do not convey the right message. For example, the college will authorise up to 10 day's holiday absence during term time, if the student's current level of attendance is above 95%. This is not appropriate and does not help

the college to improve attendance.

- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through a range of enrichment activities, as well as in lesson themselves. The performing arts specialism actively encourages students to think creatively and to be good team players.
- The promotion of equal opportunities has a high profile in the college, and leaders monitor the performance of different groups of students well. This, and the small size of the college, has helped to create a community where everyone is known and feels valued.
- Students make a positive contribution to the life of the college. Their self-esteem is increased by being given positions of responsibility, including prefects. The College Council has made a positive contribution to reviewing the sanctions system, involving moving detention sessions from the end of the day into the lunch hour.

The leadership and management are good

- The small leadership team works well together. The Principal and two Assistant Principals complement each other well, and are ambitious for the college's future. Since gaining the permanent position, following one year in an acting role, the Principal has introduced new systems and initiatives which have started to raise standards further.
- The improved process of tracking students' attainment, linked to regular progress checks across all years and groups of students, has put achievement at the top of the college's agenda. Heads of subjects and the SENCO use this information to ensure that students who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly. Suitable support is then offered so that students working at school action plus or who receive pupil premium make up on lost ground.
- Leaders and managers at all levels have developed effective ways for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the college's work. These include looking through students' books, observing teaching and monitoring students' attitudes towards learning. The findings from these activities have been used well to feedback to teachers and help to improve their teaching.
- The Principal acknowledges the importance of linking the findings from monitoring and review activities more closely to targets identified in the college improvement plan in order to see whether progress through the plan is rapid enough.
- Pupil premium funding has been used wisely to fund the services of a senior Educational Welfare Officer, as well as to provide alternative education programmes including the use of home tutoring. The funding also provides financial support to ensure eligible students can participate in school excursions, which form a key part of their learning.
- The college's self-evaluation document is accurate and inspectors agreed with the judgements made. This document correctly identifies key focus areas which aim to raise standards further.
- The college works well in partnership with other organisations. Indeed, leaders, managers and governors wish to build on these links through the proposed membership of the Comberton Academy Trust from September 2013. Teachers have benefited from visiting local schools to observe and share good practice.
- Teaching is managed well and inspectors agreed with senior leaders' judgement of teaching when they visited lessons together. Records of observations of teachers rightly identify good

practice and areas for development. Opportunities are sometime missed to share the best practice in teaching across all subject areas.

- The college offers a wide range of subjects and qualifications. Because the academic year starts for Years 8 to 11 in May, with all students moving up to the next year group, the focus on learning is sustained well. Students enjoy the extensive range of clubs and after-school activities which enrich their learning experience.
- The few students who attend any alternative provision develop a range of key skills which prepares them well for the world of work.
- The Principal has worked collaboratively with the governing body to set up future systems which aim to reward effective teaching with progression up the pay scale. The management of teachers' performance is closely linked to school improvement priorities and the setting of challenging targets.
- Leaders have created good opportunities to engage with parents and carers. The Principal's weekly surgery aims to encourage parents and carers to share their views and express any concerns. Feedback is also encouraged through regular Parents' Focus Group meetings. Regular newsletters and bulletins keep parents and carers informed of latest events.
- Although the college has no formal early entry policy for GCSE, it has entered some of its most-able students in Year 10 for GCSE in mathematics. The overwhelming majority of these students achieve the top GCSE grades.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the challenges facing the college. Discussions with governors during the inspection demonstrated a strong awareness of students' achievement, and of how well different groups of students achieve compared to others. They systematically monitor how pupil premium funding is benefiting targeted students. Governors receive regular reports from senior leaders and heads of subject areas on how well students are achieving, and to what extent the college is meeting the targets identified in the improvement plan. They also receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and the management of teachers' performance, which informs decisions as to whether or not they progress up the pay scale. Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are in place, and that statutory requirements are met.

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	137527
Local authority	Not applicable
Inspection number	402762

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	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	474
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Smith
Headteacher	Simon Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01763 223400
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