

# Chesterton Community College Academy

Gilbert Road, Cambridge, CB4 3NY

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 and achieve well from typically average starting points.
- Attainment by Year 11 in GCSE examinations is above average. In 2013, students achieved the school's best ever results.
- Most teaching is good; some is outstanding.
- Teachers and students develop very positive working relationships.
- There is a strong promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values.
- Attitudes to learning and behaviour around the school are good. Students feel safe.
- Students enjoy school and their attendance is above average. They learn enthusiastically, collaboratively and often creatively.
- The headteacher, other leaders and the governing body lead and manage the school well. There is clear planning for improvement.
- Senior leaders and heads of faculty work well together to make assessments of their performance constructive.
- The school makes sure that students receive the individual guidance they need to make informed decisions about their future lives.
- The school provides a well-considered range of courses and clubs which benefit the students well.
- The governing body provides good support and challenges the school effectively. Governors promote strongly the importance of the school's role in the community.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding, particularly in how work is planned for all groups of students.
- Some teaching leaves insufficient time for students to work independently.
- The use of questioning does not always deepen students' understanding.
- The school's good practice in what it terms 'dialogue marking' is not yet consistently established across all subjects.
- Actions arising from a thorough review of provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs have still to be implemented fully and assessed.

## Information about this inspection

- On the first day of the inspection the school operated a normal timetable. Inspectors observed 26 lessons and teachers. Ten of these lessons were seen jointly with members of the school's senior leadership team. Daily tutor-time lessons were seen. In addition, inspectors undertook 'learning walks' around the school to observe its life and students at work.
- Meetings were held with groups of students selected at random by the lead inspector. In addition, many informal opportunities were taken to talk with students. Inspectors heard a sample of students from Key Stage 3 read.
- On the second day of the inspection the normal timetable was replaced by a 'curriculum enrichment' day. Most Year 7 and 8 students took part in educational trips and visits involving historical and cultural awareness, technology and the concept of 'working together'. Year 9 students were working off-site for a 'Maths Day'. Year 10 students were undertaking controlled assessments in science, and were not observed.
- Eight other activities were taking place in school; inspectors sampled all eight of these activities, involving eight teachers and a visiting specialist. Additional Year 7 and 8 activities followed themes relating to the trips and visits. Year 11 all explored an 'Aim Higher!' theme preparing them for life in the sixth form and beyond.
- In addition, inspectors undertook a scrutiny of samples of students' work, selected at random by inspectors. A physical education teacher was also observed working in partnership with students and teachers from a local special school, as part of their normal weekly activities.
- Throughout the inspection, inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, various monitoring files, safeguarding and curriculum materials, information provided for families, and governing body documents. The school's data and assessment records for the tracking of the students' progress were scrutinised.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, senior heads of faculty, class teachers, the special educational needs coordinator, administrative staff, and members of the governing body. The school's support from the education consultants it employs was also explored.
- The 155 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View were taken into consideration, as was the content of letters sent to the lead inspector during the inspection. The 58 responses to the questionnaire for school staff were also taken into account.

## Inspection team

Michael Miller, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Nicholas Asker	Additional Inspector
Isobel Randall	Additional Inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Chesterton Community College Academy (commonly known as Chesterton Community College) converted to become an academy school in July 2011. When its predecessor school, also known as Chesterton Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- It is an average-sized secondary school, and a specialist humanities college.
- The new headteacher took up her post in September 2013.
- The large majority of the students come from White heritage backgrounds, mainly White British. A few come from Mixed or Asian and Asian British backgrounds. The largest minority heritage group is of Bangladeshi students. A very few come from a variety of other heritage backgrounds.
- Most students speak English as their first language, but the proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average. Only a few Key Stage 3 students, who joined the school in September 2013, are at an early stage of English language development.
- The proportion of students for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional government funding for particular groups, including those known to be eligible for free school meals) is average.
- The proportion of disabled students or those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- Most students receiving additional support experience moderate learning difficulty, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and specific learning difficulty. A few others experience a range of difficulties including speech, language and communication needs, hearing difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder.
- A very few students may receive alternative provision through the local authority at The County School, a pupil referral unit. The school also has close links with The Castle School, a special school located close by.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students by the end of Year 11.

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

- Ensure the momentum for improving teaching and students' achievement is rolled out across all year groups, and increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
  - making sure that teachers use questions not only to check on students' understanding but also to challenge students to think and reflect more deeply, and independently, about their learning, especially in whole-class situations
  - ensuring teachers are more consistent in the ways they plan and set students work so that it is matched specifically to their different abilities and individual needs
  - carrying out fully the actions arising from the school's review of its provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and assessing their effectiveness
  - making sure the recently introduced good practice in creating a dialogue with students through marking is extended across all subjects so that students identify increasingly clearly what they need to do improve their learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Students join the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment which are typically average. By the end of Year 11, attainment is above average, and particularly in GCSE examinations. School data on students' progress show this improves steadily year-on-year, and their achievement is good. Discussions with students confirm that their increasing success and good progress reflect their positive attitudes to and enjoyment of learning.
- Data provided by the school show that progress has been improving over the last two years. In summer 2013 students attained better GCSE results than in 2012. The new 'achievement boards', listing the success of students at both whole-school and faculty levels, are an inspiration for students.
- Most students, including the few from minority heritage groups, are achieving well and making good progress. The proportions of students making expected and better progress in English and mathematics is improving, and above average. In the summer 2013 national examinations attainment was above average in both English and mathematics. The school is also establishing a good track record in its specialist humanities subjects; attainment in 2013 was above average in both history and geography when compared with the latest national results.
- Some more-able Year 10 students are entered early for GCSE mathematics. Success rates have so far proved very positive, particularly in respect of higher grade A and A\* passes. The experience of early entry is standing such students in good stead for their Year 11 examinations and is not holding them back.
- The school uses well the additional funding from the national 'Year 7 catch-up' programme for literacy and numeracy. In 2012–13, as a result of work with intervention staff, Year 7 students who did not make the progress expected of them by the end of primary school made on average around two terms better progress than expected in both English and mathematics.
- School data show that students for whom the school receives the pupil premium are also making good progress and achieving well. The gap between their performance and other students at the school is narrowing considerably; it halved between 2012 and 2013. By Summer 2013, although such students in Year 11 had made around five terms' slower progress than other students at the school, their attainment was well above average in English compared with those eligible for free school meals nationally, and above average in mathematics.
- All current students who are at an early stage of English language development only joined the school in September 2013. Consequently, they are still in the process of being assessed so their progress may be monitored effectively. The school has good tracking systems to enable it to do this. Similarly very few students need additional support through the local authority's Pupil Referral Service. The individual progress of any such students is monitored carefully.
- The progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is good. As with all students, they are set challenging targets given their individual starting points. School data show nearly all achieve these due to support staff becoming increasingly effectively trained to meet individual students' needs, whether physical or academic. Support staff monitor such students' achievements regularly and intervene effectively to help accelerate their learning. This is an example of the way the school promotes equality of opportunity for all students.
- Some outstanding achievement was seen in a lower set Year 7 science lesson where students

were involved in collecting and presenting experimental data through graphs. Their discussions and thinking enabled them to become adept at spotting patterns and exploring hypotheses about their work. Excellent monitoring of their progress by both the teacher and teaching assistant challenged and engaged the students, and caused them to become highly motivated.

### **The quality of teaching** is good

- Most teaching is good because lessons are planned well, with clear and relevant work and tasks which are communicated clearly to students. Teaching usually provides most students with a good level of challenge through a variety of well-paced activities.
- In the best lessons, teachers actively encourage students to think deeply about complex ideas. Students work collaboratively to solve problems, and support each other's learning very effectively. Teachers place a significant emphasis on students' skills development as well as subject matter. Consequently, students feel challenged, enjoy learning, and no time is wasted.
- Outstanding teaching and learning were seen, for example, in a Year 11 history lesson. Here, visual images of the Vietnam war promoted a profound discussion of the role of the media. There were ample opportunities for students to discuss spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, and to reflect on their own attitudes to the subject matter and learning.
- However, in some lessons, work is not always matched precisely enough to the needs of all groups or individual students. This is either because it is more focused on a particular group or the teaching has not considered fully the good data on student performance provided by the school. Consequently, occasionally, students of higher ability may be insufficiently challenged or lower ability students may struggle to access the work.
- Teachers' use of questioning, with individuals and small groups, is often of high quality in promoting discussion and debate. However, although teachers often question students successfully, to encourage reflection and check on learning, sometimes whole-class questioning is more superficial, and does not deepen students' understanding as fully as it should.
- Marking is usually regular and helpful, providing clear guidance to students on how to improve. The school has recently introduced a 'dialogue marking' scheme through which students respond formally to teachers' comments, both orally and in writing in their workbooks. This is starting to be established well, particularly in the English Baccalaureate subjects. There is good evidence of students' benefiting from acting on teachers' advice through the re-drafting and correction of their work. This good practice is still developing across all subjects and is not so well advanced in some as it is in others.
- Exercise books are generally well presented, reflecting students' maturity and pride in their learning. Students read widely in lessons, in tutor periods and in the library. The school is developing a number of imaginative practices which promote literacy, including through pilot work on specialist vocabulary development by the school's humanities faculty.

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

- Most parents responding to Parent View, and those writing letters to the inspectors, consider that their children are happy at the school, are cared for well and feel safe. Attendance is above average, and the vast majority of students are almost always punctual to school and lessons. The expectations staff and students have of each other contribute significantly to students' attitudes to learning and the ways they show social responsibility.

- There are no exclusions, but there is an 'isolation room' and system of detentions. These are used mainly for those students who are either persistently late or fail to do homework. A few parents expressed some concern about this, but school records show the need to use such sanctions is reducing as the relatively few students concerned get the point.
- Behaviour around school is friendly; students are polite and helpful. They show a mature and proper concern for each other and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and the school community safe. They demonstrate a good awareness of the different types of bullying, including homophobic and cyber bullying. Most students show very good levels of self-control, reflecting their good social and moral development.
- Students often exercise very good initiative and this helps drive their own learning. However, opportunities for students to work independently are sometimes limited. On such occasions students become more passive in their learning.
- The school advertises its 'ethos' very prominently on its website, and staff wear the 'Chesterton Ethos' logo on the back of their high-visibility jackets when on duty. Students appreciate this as they realise that ensuring each student reaches his or her potential is a high priority for the school. Consequently, students show suitably high expectations of both themselves and others.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Leaders, at all levels, have shown they can make a difference to students' lives. The steady improvements in students' achievement and progress reflect this. The shared lesson observations carried out by inspectors with senior leaders show that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning.
- There is also a strong element of team work across the school. This was reflected in discussions with staff, at all levels, and through parents' letters and staff questionnaires. The new headteacher, leadership team and governing body are working effectively in many ways to make sure the school builds on what has proved to be a secure capacity for improvement.
- Discussions with heads of faculty show they are often buzzing with good ideas which they share with others, and pilot as necessary. They make a positive contribution to school improvement and development planning. The close links between heads of faculty and governors linked to their departments not only means they are held accountable but also benefits the students.
- The school has developed a range of relevant courses for the students which prepare them well for the next stage of education, work and their future lives in general. Excellent learning about personal finance, for example, was demonstrated in a Year 11 enrichment lesson. Students showed that they not only appreciate that 'life is expensive' but also understand the importance of prudent financial management if they are to achieve their aspirations.
- As an academy, the school chooses not to have any one specific adviser, but uses a number of independent consultants to review and evaluate its work as necessary. Discussions with the headteacher show the school gains good value for money from this approach. The school's commitment to further improvement is reflected in its use of such a consultant to review its provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs. It is aiming to use the actions arising from this review to strengthen further its teaching and accelerate students' progress, although these have not been fully carried out or their impact measured yet.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is well informed about the school’s performance. It uses well the personal and professional expertise of all governors to both support and challenge the school.
- Governors compare and contrast the school’s performance with others nationally. Through their study of the school’s data, regular visits and links with faculties, governors have a clear understanding of how and why the various groups of students make the progress they do. Governors know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance.
- The governing body, through close links with each faculty, checks systematically on the effectiveness of the teaching. Together with the headteacher, it ensures that teachers’ performance management targets are linked closely to both school development and improvement and national ‘Teachers’ Standards’. Teachers are only promoted if they are applying these standards and their students are making good progress.
- The governing body knows how the pupil premium funding is allocated and produces a statement showing how it is spent. This is being used well not only on additional staffing to provide individual tuition but also to give pupils the essential specialist resources to support their English, mathematics and general work and make sure such students are not disadvantaged.
- Together with the headteacher and other senior leaders, the governing body makes sure procedures and policies for safeguarding students are in place.

## 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>	136887
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425398

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Academy converter
<b>School category</b>	Non-maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	898
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Simon Peyton Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lucy Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	N/A
<b>Telephone number</b>	01223 712150
<b>Fax number</b>	01223 300786
<b>Email address</b>	office@chesterton.cambs.sch.uk

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