

Sir Harry Smith Community College

Eastrea Road, Whittlesey, Peterborough, PE7 1XB

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Sixth form provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The principal is an effective leader who has raised the expectations of staff. With the support of other leaders and governors, he has improved the quality of teaching and the achievement of students.
- Students make good progress in most subjects, including English and mathematics. Disabled students and those with special educational needs make good progress.
- Students benefit from good teaching in most subjects.
- Students are proud of their school and behave with respect and consideration towards each other. Relationships between staff and students are positive.
- Behaviour is good and students feel safe in school.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged students and that of other students in the school is decreasing rapidly.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well, especially in vocational subjects, and are well prepared for the next stage in their education and adult life.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Students make good rather than exceptional progress. Some students of higher ability do not yet achieve enough higher grades in their GCSE examinations.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Not every teacher plans activities that challenge students of all abilities.
- A few teachers do not have high enough expectations of higher ability students and so these students do not always have high enough expectations of themselves.
- Not all teachers take full advantage of students' enthusiasm for learning or have high enough expectations of what they can achieve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 42 lessons, some conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- A range of documents was analysed by inspectors, including those relating to safeguarding, students' progress, attendance, the school's self-evaluation and development plan, and its policies for managing teachers' performance and pay and for improving teaching and learning.
- Inspectors looked closely at students' books and coursework, especially in English and mathematics. Inspectors took account of 87 responses to the online survey, Parent View, one telephone call from a parent and 75 responses to the staff survey.
- Discussions were held with the principal, other senior and subject leaders, several groups of students, a representative from the local authority and the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors.

Inspection team

Lesley Daniel, Lead inspector	Seconded Inspector
Jennifer Griffiths	Additional Inspector
Shan Oswald	Additional Inspector
Jeremy Seymour	Additional Inspector

Lesley Daniel is appointed as an Additional Inspector, under the powers relating to additional inspectors, in paragraph 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 12 to the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Full report

Information about this school

- Sir Harry Smith Community College is an average-sized secondary school which converted to become an academy in August 2012. When its predecessor school, also called Sir Harry Smith Community College, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2011, it was judged to be good overall.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds and few speak English as an additional language.
- About a quarter of students at the college are supported by the pupil premium, which is broadly average. Pupil premium is extra funding provided by the government for some groups of students including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- Just over one third of students, who are disabled or who have special educational needs, are supported through school action, school action plus, a statement of special educational needs or a new education, health and care plan. This is well above average.
- The college runs a specially resourced provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is known as the Enhanced Provision Centre and provides support for 20 students with moderate learning difficulties.
- A very small number of Key Stage 4 students attend part-time vocational courses at Peterborough regional College.
- The college meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is outstanding and more students make exceptional progress by:
 - encouraging all teachers to enthuse students of all abilities with a thirst for knowledge to increase the pace at which they make progress
 - making sure that all teachers give students clear and precise advice on how to improve their work
 - ensuring that all teachers expect and help students to spell and write correctly
 - ensuring that all teachers plan for the progress of all groups of students in their lessons, including higher ability students, so that students reach their full potential.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal and the governing body have driven forward improvements in behaviour and the quality of teaching, building a skilled team of senior leaders who have developed and sustained a sharp focus on raising standards. Most subject leaders, especially in English, mathematics and science have successfully taken responsibility for leading learning and improving teaching in their departments.
- Senior leaders and governors have established an inclusive and supportive culture which promotes equality of opportunity for all. It also provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its students.
- The college has rigorous systems for reviewing the performance of teachers, to tackle underperformance and to reward those who teach effectively, which continue to drive the improvement of teaching. Following disappointing science results in summer 2013, senior leaders took rapid and decisive action. They removed other responsibilities from some science teachers so that they could focus purely on improving outcomes for students who were then in Year 11. This had a clear impact on the results of these students in 2014. A new head of science has continued to drive improvements this term, with evidence of increased progress seen in students' books and during observations in lessons.
- The principal and governing body also acted in 2013 to improve the achievement of disadvantaged students through the appointment of a new member of staff to join two highly effective teaching assistants already providing support in English and mathematics. This expansion of the team enabled closer monitoring and therefore quicker interventions to support these students across a range of GCSE subjects and had a clear impact on the outcomes for disadvantaged Year 11 students in 2014.
- The college has good systems for checking its own effectiveness. It has a clear and realistic picture of the progress it is making and also of what still needs to be done to accelerate improvement. Evaluations by inspectors were closely in line with those of senior leaders.
- The college provides a curriculum at all key stages that is appropriate for the students. Senior leaders listen to what students say about the subjects they would like to study at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. They balance students' wishes well against staffing and financial restrictions.
- The college's programme of assemblies, tutor time activities, religious education and 'skills for life' lessons ensures that students are aware of what it means to be a good citizen in modern Britain. Students demonstrate tolerance of the ways different groups of people choose to lead their lives. They show a good understanding of the importance of developing personal skills, such as how to manage their own finances.
- The college offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities for students to participate in. It also creates good opportunities for them to take on real responsibility, such as running their own radio station and organising whole-school charity events. Key Stage 4 and sixth form students were particularly enthusiastic about this, and talked with impressive commercial awareness of their plans for financing their radio station to ensure its future.
- The college has robust systems for monitoring the behaviour, attendance and progress of all groups of students. This includes those who attend alternative provision. Subject leaders are increasingly effective in the way they use data to monitor learning in their departments and hold teachers to account for the progress of students.
- The college offers an appropriate range of advice and guidance to students as they make decisions about the next stages in their education, or when considering career choices. For example, students all have individual interviews, and information evenings for students and their parents are well attended. Students feel well informed when deciding their next steps in education, training or employment.
- The college's arrangements for keeping children safe in school are robust and meet all statutory requirements.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are very well informed about all aspects of the college, especially the quality of teaching, how well students are achieving and how the performance of teachers is managed. They are also fully involved in decisions about how pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having.
- The skills of individual governors are recognised and made good use of by the college. Governors confidently question and hold senior leaders to account for how well students are doing. They have a good understanding of data about performance to help them do this. They have successfully managed finances ensuring that resources are available to support new strategic appointments.
- The governing body carries out its statutory obligations to keep children safe and ensure equality for all.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The vast majority of students comply fully with the college's high expectations and behave well in lessons, at break times and when moving around the site. Students clearly understand and support the sanctions that are in place to deal with any unacceptable behaviour. Parents are kept fully informed of both positive and negative incidents by emails, on a daily basis.
- Relationships between students and staff are positive and students are appreciative of their teachers and their college. Students arrive at lessons willing to learn and this has a good impact on their achievement. However, although inspectors did see a real thirst for knowledge from students in lessons, this is not yet consistent and some students do not always strive to achieve the very best they are capable of.
- The college manages students whose behaviour can be challenging well. Students are rarely moved to be educated elsewhere or excluded temporarily and the college uses internal exclusion effectively to ensure that their education is not disrupted.
- Attendance is effectively monitored and is above the national average for secondary schools.

Safety

- The college's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Students say that they feel safe and well supported at college. The few students who attend part-time courses elsewhere are well monitored by senior leaders who are confident that they are safe while attending their courses.
- Students are well informed about the issues of bullying, including homophobic and cyber-bullying and students can train to become cyber-bullying mentors to support their peers. Students say that bullying in college is rare and that when it does occur it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. This is supported by the college's records of such incidents.
- Students are taught how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including on the internet and when they are outside of college. They find out useful facts on subjects such as sexual health and drug abuse and are given the opportunity to discuss these issues in a safe environment. Consequently, they understand clearly the potential risks to their safety and their responsibilities in relation to looking after others.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is good and leads to good achievement particularly in mathematics and English. Most teachers have high expectations and create a positive climate for learning. This has contributed to the good progress that most students make in college.
- Students enjoy their lessons and inspectors saw much teaching that challenged and interested students. In a Year 9 English lesson, middle ability students writing diary entries responded enthusiastically to the teacher's challenge to use four specific techniques in their written work, including semi-colons. The

students were very keen to then read their work out to the whole group.

- There is a common drive across the college to improve literacy. For example, a weekly literacy focus is introduced in tutor time and reinforced during lessons. Many teachers also effectively promote the correct use of specialist subject language in their lessons. In Year 9, drama students spoke confidently of 'freeze-frames' and 'hot-seating' and, in Year 9, English terms such as 'connotation' and 'alliteration' were understood by all.
- Teachers use homework effectively to support and reinforce learning. Students' books show that homework is regularly set and commented on by teachers. Science teachers have recently introduced homework activities online, which are proving very popular with students. Teachers mark books regularly, but their feedback does not always give students a clear idea about what they have to do to improve. Even where it is useful, not all students respond to the advice. Students' books show that, often, they continue to make the same mistakes in their writing, such as incorrect punctuation and spelling, without this being challenged by teachers.
- Teaching in science has improved and is now good and in line with the good quality of teaching seen in English and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively in lessons to support the learning of disabled students and those with special educational needs. Where collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants is high, the experience of all students in the classroom was enhanced. The input of teaching assistants is valued by students.
- There is still some variation in the quality of teaching across subjects. This is being steadily reduced. Some teachers do not always provide suitable challenge for students of all abilities. They do not adapt planned activities quickly enough for students who find the work too easy. As a result, these students do not make as much progress as they should.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because, by the end of Key Stage 4, students have made good progress in most subjects. The proportion of students who make expected progress in English is consistently in line with students nationally, and in mathematics this proportion is consistently above national figures. The proportion of students making more than expected progress in both English and in mathematics in all year groups is rising strongly.
- In 2014, the percentage of students achieving five or more GCSE passes at A* to C grades, including English and mathematics was above the national average and has been for the past three years. The attainment of students in science GCSEs has improved considerably, following disappointing results in 2013, and is now above that of other students nationally.
- The gap between the attainment at GCSE in English and mathematics of disadvantaged students and other students at the college is closing rapidly. In 2013, disadvantaged students typically achieved one grade lower than other students but in 2014 this gap had closed to one third of a grade. In 2013, these students achieved in line with other disadvantaged students nationally. No figures are yet available for 2014. Disadvantaged students are making better progress than other students in the school and nationally.
- The achievement of disabled students and those with special educational needs is good, with most students across all year groups making the progress expected of them. Inspectors listened to some lower ability Year 7 students read and talk about their understanding of what they were reading. Through effective intervention, these students have improved their reading by a whole level since arriving at the college.
- Students at the Enhanced Provision Centre learn in a nurturing environment that aims to develop their confidence and social skills as well as literacy and numeracy. Observations by inspectors and college data

show that these students make good progress in these areas and many successfully join lessons in the main school, especially in Key Stage 4.

- Achievement in the sixth form is good for vocational subjects and standards are average and rising strongly for A levels. Disadvantaged students make more progress than other students and disabled students and those with special educational needs are well supported to meet their targets.
- Early entry for GCSE was only used for some higher ability students in English Language in November 2014. These students went on to focus on English Literature for the rest of their course. The percentage of students who achieved an A* to C grade in English Language increased from 2013 and there was a small increase in the percentage who achieved the highest grades.
- Students join the college with levels of attainment that are broadly average. Middle and lower ability students make better progress than more able students.
- College data shows that the rate of progress of the most-able students is increasing at Key Stage 3 and is strengthening in current GCSE groups. Work in students' books and observations of lessons supported this.

The sixth form provision

is good

- The sixth form is small but growing with increasing numbers of Year 11 students staying on rather than going to sixth forms elsewhere. More students are choosing to follow a mixed programme of academic and vocational subjects, with the majority making good progress from their starting points. Vocational subjects continue to be successful, with students making better progress than other students nationally.
- Retention rates have improved considerably and are currently at 100%. The advice and guidance given to students as they make decisions about their future both in Year 11 and at sixth form is good and students speak highly of the support and advice they receive from their teachers. Students are encouraged to consider a variety of post 16 options, including apprenticeships and university, and the college is working to raise the aspirations of students. Nearly two thirds of Year 13 students went on to higher education last year.
- Behaviour in the sixth form is good. Students feel valued and are good role models for younger members of the college. They appreciate opportunities to give back to the college through supporting younger students. There is a good range of enrichment opportunities on offer, including volunteering and work experience, and the college is working to widen this in the future. All sixth form students continue skills for life lessons which help them with the transition to Year 12 and also prepare them for life after school.
- Teaching in the sixth form reflects the strengths and areas for further development found in the main school, and is good overall. In a few lessons, students, especially those of higher ability, are not given activities that require them to think for themselves or to help them deepen their understanding. However, marking and feedback are good in most subjects and exceptional in some. In A and AS level history and English, students' work showed rapid improvement in response to detailed feedback and students spoke confidently about what they needed to do to continue to raise the quality of their written work.

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	138053
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	449405

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	987
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandy Donnachie
Principal	Jonathan Digby
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01733 703991
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