

Countesthorpe Community College

Winchester Road, Countesthorpe, Leicester, LE8 5PR

Inspection dates 30 April–1 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Sixth form provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Not all students, especially some boys, are making enough progress.
- In 2014 the results of disadvantaged students in Year 11 showed that the students had not made enough progress in English and mathematics.
- Teaching in science has not been good enough to support good progress.
- The achievement of the most-able students requires improvement because the activities set for them are not always challenging enough.
- Some teaching does not capture the interest of students, especially boys, so they are not positive about learning.
- Leaders, including governors, have not done enough to ensure that disadvantaged students achieve well.
- A minority of students is late to school or lessons, or not willing to do their best. A small group does not attend regularly and this has a negative effect on their achievement.
- Some subject leaders have only recently started to take the actions needed to ensure that teachers have high-enough expectations for learning.
- Leaders and managers carry out suitable checks in order to keep students safe, but do not always record the checks in full. Arrangements to keep the college site secure were improved during the inspection.
- Leaders' views of how well the college is doing and students' attitudes to learning are too positive. This is limiting their capacity for improving teaching and learning rapidly.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching in mathematics and students are now making better progress in English.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are well supported and make consistently good progress.
- Students attending alternative provision make good progress and make positive choices about carrying on with education or training.
- The college promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and prepares them well for life in Britain today.
- Students in the sixth form have good attitudes to learning. Good teaching ensures that most are now making good progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed students learning in 38 lessons. Six of these lessons were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the Principal, senior and middle leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors spoke with students in meetings, as well as informally in lessons and around the college site.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the college’s evaluation of its own performance, the college improvement plan, data on students’ attainment and progress, attendance and behaviour records, safeguarding procedures, evaluations on the quality of teaching, and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took into account 154 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 82 responses to the staff questionnaire. The lead inspector also took into account direct communication from parents.

Inspection team

David Bray, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Christopher Stevens	Additional Inspector
Sharon Dudley	Additional Inspector
Wendy Adeniji	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Countesthorpe Community College is larger than the average secondary school with a sixth form.
- The proportion of students supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. This additional government funding is for students who are looked after by the local authority, or known to be eligible for free school meals. In this report, this group of students is described as disadvantaged.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is lower than average.
- The large majority of students are of White British heritage.
- A small number of students studies part-time work-related courses at Trans4m, Gaz Autos or Pedestrian.
- The college organises and manages alternative provision for the South Leicestershire Behaviour Partnership. This includes full-time courses for some students on the Countesthorpe Community College site, part-time provision at a range of alternative education providers, and behaviour outreach support for other schools within the partnership.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 11.
- The governors have made a joint proposal with the governors of Leysland High School to the Department for Education. This proposal, if accepted, would result in the closure of both schools and the opening of a new academy on the same site for students aged 11 to 19.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and accelerate students' progress in Key Stage 4 by:
 - ensuring that teachers across all subjects show high expectations for the most-able students by providing work that consistently stretches them
 - providing activities in science lessons that challenge, motivate and engage all groups of students
 - planning lessons consistently that have interesting activities, so they enthuse students, especially the minority of boys who are currently not positive about learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - leaders' checks on teaching and learning take sufficient account of students' attitudes and the progress of different groups
 - evaluation of the impact and quality of the extra support for disadvantaged students is more rigorous, especially in English and science
 - strategies to improve attendance for those students who are persistently absent are effective
 - more effective actions are taken to improve students' punctuality
 - checks on keeping students safe are recorded more carefully and improvements to site security made during the inspection are part of the college's every day practice.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken, in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The college's leaders are aware of the areas requiring improvement, but have not made enough progress in addressing some of them. They have not established a strong-enough college culture, in which teaching, achievement and behaviour are routinely good and students can flourish.
- Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements because arrangements to keep students safe are part of regular college routines. However, some records of checks carried out have not been updated fully. The security of access to the school site was improved during the inspection, in order to make it safe.
- Senior leaders have developed clear systems to set targets for students and monitor their progress. However, the systems have not resulted in enough disadvantaged students catching up with other students in the college, or in sufficient progress in science. Progress in mathematics, a key area identified in the previous inspection, is now much better. Leaders have shown that they have the capacity to tackle areas that still require improvement successfully.
- Some students are not doing well enough. Subject leadership in mathematics has made a significant positive difference. English leadership is also leading to positive changes, although some of these are relatively recent. Leadership of science has not led to enough improvement, partly because there have been too many changes in staffing to ensure continuity in learning.
- Senior leaders check teaching regularly, but some of their evaluations are too positive. They do not take sufficient account of the progress students make over time, especially different groups of students, or the negative attitudes to learning of some students. As a result, leaders have not done enough to improve the attendance, punctuality and attitudes of some students, especially some boys.
- Leaders are aware that their use of additional government funding for disadvantaged students has not been sufficiently effective in closing the gap in their attainment and progress, when compared to other students in the college. Some improvements have been made, especially in mathematics. The gap is still too large for some students in English and in science.
- The college ensures that a good range of subjects is available for students to study. Despite this, some teaching does not capture students' interest and motivate them.
- Leaders have demonstrated they have the capacity to improve the college. Changes in the leadership of mathematics have resulted in current students making good progress and disadvantaged students catching up with their peers. Leadership in English has ensured that expectations are now consistently higher. Some of the recent changes, however, have not yet had sufficient effect, especially in science.
- Students have good opportunities to develop their spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding. Several topics ensure they have the opportunity to consider wider issues about their lives and the experiences of others. A good range of additional clubs, trips and events makes a good contribution to students' understanding of life in modern Britain. Students are aware of the importance of democracy and law.
- Although the school does not accept discrimination and promotes equal opportunities, leaders have not ensured that all students are achieving as well as they can.
- Leadership of the sixth form is good. It is enabling students to make good progress across a wide range of subjects. Students benefit from independent and impartial advice on careers and post-16 education. This has started to ensure that a higher proportion of students completes courses in the sixth form. It helps students also to make informed choices about Key Stage 4 courses.
- A few college students are educated full-time at the South Leicestershire Behaviour Partnership, alongside students from other local schools. The college manages this provision on behalf of a consortium of local schools. Arrangements to check the attendance and progress of students are good. The provision enables

many to stay engaged with learning. This is also the case for some students who attend other part-time courses at other education providers. Staff provided additional support for other schools within the partnership. This is enabling them to keep some students positively engaged in education.

- The headteacher and governors have considered the future direction of the academy carefully. The proposal to merge with the local school for younger students is at an advanced stage of planning.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance requires improvement. Governors have a good range of skills and experience. They challenge the college's leaders regularly about its performance and have contributed to improvements made in areas such as mathematics. Governors have received training for the roles. Governors have a good understanding of most of the strengths and areas that need to improve. Although governors get regular information about teaching quality, they have not questioned sufficiently the match between this information and the progress of all students. The governors have ensured that they question decisions about teachers' pay rises and how they link to students' performance. Governors manage the finances well, although they have not ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged students is ensuring that enough are catching up with their peers in the college. Although governors have ensured that statutory requirements for safeguarding are met, they have not checked that all records are kept carefully enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Many students are positive about their experiences at the college, but some, especially boys, do not have consistently positive attitudes to learning. The attitudes have a negative impact on the progress the students make.
- The attendance of students is currently average and has improved this year. Disadvantaged students did not attend regularly enough in 2014. Although current college data show that some now have better attendance, a few still do not. That has a negative effect on those students' achievement.
- Some students lack focus, lose interest and do not try their hardest. This is particularly when teaching is weak, or because they have had several changes of teacher and feel they are not learning well enough.
- Exclusions have been high this year, particularly for boys and for disadvantaged students. Students have consistently better attitudes to learning in the sixth form, where behaviour is typically good. Many students have positive attitudes to learning in Key Stage 4.
- The students interviewed during the inspection expressed the view regularly that the behaviour of a few students is not good. They say the behaviour affects their progress occasionally. They highlighted some aspects of science lessons in particular. Lessons and work seen in the inspection confirmed their view. One in five parents who completed the Parent View survey stated that they did not feel that behaviour was good enough.
- Inspectors observed lessons where attitudes to learning were good. Students confirmed that, because teaching was more effective in English and mathematics, as well as in a range of other subjects, behaviour was good. Despite this, a few students were not positive about learning.
- Students get on well with each other when moving about the college and during break and lunchtime. Almost all students spoken to said they feel safe and do not experience bullying, name-calling, or racism. The college site is largely free from litter and graffiti.
- The behaviour of students attending alternative provision is improving and enabling them to continue learning and make good progress. Many have previously found it difficult to behave in an appropriate way.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement. The security of the college site was improved during the inspection.
- Routines are in place to check visitors. The checks made on the suitability of adults working in the college meet requirements. Staff receive regular updates in order to develop their understanding of their roles in safeguarding. However, systems for the record keeping of some of this information need improvement because although checks are carried out some have not been recorded carefully enough.
- The college has ensured that other arrangements to keep students safe meet national requirements. Students are aware of how to use the internet safely. Senior staff have had suitable training which enables them to respond to specific safeguarding issues that may arise.
- The large majority of parents who completed the Parent View survey felt that their children were safe and that bullying was not a problem. Even the few students who felt it was a problem said that, when issues had arisen, staff had resolved them effectively.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not been consistently good enough in all subjects over time to ensure that students have made good progress. That is particularly the case in some aspects of science, where staffing changes have caused significant disruption in learning and expectations have not been high enough.
- Teaching is currently better in mathematics, but the recent improvements in English have not yet had sufficient positive impact, especially for some disadvantaged students.
- Teachers in most subjects mark students' work regularly and provide them with feedback on how to improve it. Marking and feedback in English and mathematics are often of good quality and this is enabling many students to make better progress.
- While some teachers ask students probing questions to check how well the students are learning, or to extend their understanding, students are not always challenged enough to think for themselves. Teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not always high enough. Some of the most-able students, in particular, are not always making enough progress, as a result.
- Some teaching in Key Stage 4 does not motivate and engage all students. This means that some boys, in particular, do not try their hardest.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together. This ensures good support for individual students and small groups and is helping to ensure that disadvantaged students are starting to make better progress, especially in mathematics.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to ensure that students are challenged to do well. Teachers have positive relationships with students and this enables a good level of discussion, questioning, and development of ideas.
- Although many students in Key Stage 4 are well motivated, some are more indifferent to learning, particularly in subjects where they have experienced changes of staff, or ineffective teaching. That is the case especially for some disadvantaged students and for boys, in particular. A few vote with their feet by not attending regularly, by being late to lessons, or at the start of the school day.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement varies too much between age groups, subjects, and different groups of students. Although students in the sixth form achieve well, too many students lower down the school do not make enough

progress to reach the standards of which they are capable.

- Students join the college with standards that match the national average. The proportion who achieved higher GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, was average in 2014, although disadvantaged students achieved more than one grade lower than other students in the college and all students nationally in English and mathematics. They did less well also in science, humanities, and languages, although they did much better across several other subjects.
- Boys did significantly less well than girls in GCSE outcomes in 2014. Improvements have been made in mathematics, where expectations for what students can achieve are consistently high. Attainment and progress in English were below average in 2014, but are now improving. Students made good progress in dance, resistant materials, and geography.
- Disadvantaged students in the college currently are making better progress in mathematics and college data, which inspectors agreed with, show that many had caught up with their peers. They are just starting to catch up in English, but too many are still behind in science.
- Too many students underachieved in core and additional science in 2014. Current school data and the work seen by inspectors show that, although they are starting to make better progress in some areas, the students are still not doing well enough. Some students spoken to during the inspection said they make enough progress in mathematics and increasingly in English, but not always in science. In their view, that was due to some ineffective teaching and changes in staffing.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive effective support through extra tuition and additional support from teaching assistants. That is enabling them to learn well in English and mathematics.
- The progress of the most-able students in 2014 was not good enough. Fewer students attained the highest grades in several subjects in Key Stage 4, including English. Current college data show that these students are starting to do better, especially in mathematics. Some of the most-able sixth-form students did better and a significant group went on to study at highly regarded universities. The college has not used early entry to examinations in either English or mathematics.
- When students join the college, they are competent at reading and writing. Those with special educational needs who need extra support receive it. As a result, most students continue to develop their literacy skills effectively across a range of subjects. Many students are able to talk with confidence and fluency. However, some disadvantaged students, especially boys, have not made sufficient progress in developing their literacy skills.
- Students join with numeracy skills that match the national average. Effective teaching of mathematics enables them to be confident in performing calculations, or solving mathematical problems across different subjects.
- Part-time and full-time Key Stage 4 students educated through the South Leicestershire Behaviour Partnership are able to stay positively engaged with learning. Most attend regularly and are making good progress against their targets. Current Year 11 students are making positive choices about the next stage of their learning.

The sixth form provision

is good

- Students in the sixth form achieve well because they are taught well and are consistently more motivated and interested in their learning than students in Key Stage 4. The progress made by students who completed academic courses in 2014 was broadly average. College data, work seen and discussions with students confirm that teaching is good in most subjects and current students are often doing better. Subjects where achievement has been less good are also improving.
- The small number of disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational

needs make similar progress to others in the sixth form. Leaders are ensuring those students catch up with their peers.

- Teaching is good. Teachers, often, show a good understanding of their subjects and are able to explain ideas clearly. They are often effective at checking areas that students are not clear about and going over ideas. Good relationships allow effective discussions, questioning, and development of ideas.
- Students are positive about the academic support they receive. Progress is monitored carefully and this is ensuring that any underachievement is picked up quickly. Leadership has been effective because areas of under-performance have been prioritised and this has led to improved progress for current students.
- Behaviour and safety in the sixth form are good. Students say they have a more-positive relationship with their teachers than they did in Key Stage 4.
- Study programmes ensure that students are making good progress. Students who do not achieve entry requirements in English and mathematics are able to receive extra tuition and retake examinations. Many have been successful in achieving the expected level.
- Students receive good guidance when choosing their next options, including helpful advice on completion of UCAS applications. Although the proportion of students leaving at the end of Year 12 was already higher than average in 2012, more effective support for choosing courses has ensured that this has improved. The proportion of students who left the sixth form in 2014 and did not go on to education, employment, or training was low.
- Many students participate in a good range of activities that allow them to take roles of responsibility and develop skills that prepare them for education, employment, and life beyond school. Students take part in charity fund-raising and participate in additional sporting and arts activities. They have good opportunities to participate in residential trips and visits to universities and to take on positions of responsibility.

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	138524
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	462007

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	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1057
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Upritchard
Principal	Brian Myatt
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2013
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