



# Southmoor Mathematics and Computing College

Inspection report

**Better  
education  
and care**

Unique Reference Number 108861  
 LEA Sunderland LEA

Inspection number 275901  
 Inspection dates 28 - 29 June 2005  
 Reporting inspector Mrs H Gordon HMI

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Comprehensive, community specialist mathematics and ICT	School address	Ryhope Road, Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR2 7TF
School category	secondary		
Age range of pupils	11 - 16		
Gender of pupils	mixed	Telephone number	0191 5537600
Number on roll	1490	Fax number	0191 5537603
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Brown
Date of previous inspection	28 September 1998	Headteacher	Mrs E Bowman

Age group	Published	Reference no.
11 - 16	July 2005	275901

---

© Crown copyright 2005

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the Southmoor community, mathematics and information and communications (ICT) college and of the local education authority. The inspection was carried out by five of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

### Description of the college

Southmoor mathematics and ICT college is a much bigger than average secondary school, with slightly more girls than boys. It is popular and oversubscribed. Pupils entering the school represent a wide range of attainment, but there are more pupils whose attainment is below average than nationally. The school roll has been affected by Local Education Authority plans for re-organisation and its intake is undergoing a period of change. The school currently draws on three main feeder primary schools and some of its pupils come from socially deprived backgrounds. Around one in six pupils has free school meals; this is broadly in line with national figures. There are more pupils with special educational needs than is usual nationally, but the number of pupils with statements of educational need is broadly in line. Slightly more pupils than average do not have English as their first language but are making progress in learning it. The Department for Education and Science (DfES) recognises the good quality of the school's provision for inclusion and its success in sport is reflected in Sportsmark award.

### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, with many strengths. It is well-led and managed. Standards in examinations and tests are improving and are now around what we would expect to find in a secondary school. Last year there was a noticeable improvement. Pupils make satisfactory progress and the school has clear plans for how to raise attainment further. Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported and their behaviour is generally good. When it is not, this tends to be related to the quality of the lessons: content does not meet their needs well enough, teaching is not stimulating, or lacks challenge and pace. Pupils can lose interest and a minority then misbehave. The school works hard to ensure that every pupil can take advantage of what it offers and this is a strength. The school provides well for pupils' personal development. There is a good climate for learning and a good range of opportunities for pupils outside lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to exercise responsibility and to contribute to the school and community.

Teaching is satisfactory; some of the lessons visited were good, occasionally they were outstanding. The school sets considerable store by teachers sharing good ideas and practice in order to learn from one another. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection: consultation with parents is better and middle managers have improved their expertise. Pupils' GCSE examination results have improved overall and in 2004 significantly. However, there is still too much variation across and within subjects and standards in science have not improved sufficiently. The range of subjects and courses is satisfactory and is evolving to meet the needs of the widely diverse pupil intake. Attendance is unsatisfactory, despite the school's efforts.

The school has good capacity to improve. The Headteacher knows her school's strengths and weaknesses well and her drive to raise standards is evident. She has already made some successful changes to improve provision and is supported well in this by her staff and a strong leadership team.

**Grade: 3**

### What the school should do to improve further

#### To continue to raise standards the school should:

- address the underperformance in certain subjects at KS4
- improve attainment in science
- further improve the quality of teaching and learning
- further develop curriculum in years 10 and 11 to better meet the diverse range of pupils' needs
- improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

Standards and progress are satisfactory. The 2004 GCSE results are close to the national figure for all schools, continuing a year on year improvement. The rise in pupils' point score is impressive, beyond that expected for schools in similar circumstances. The school has analysed the slight fall in the numbers of pupils who leave school with at least one GCSE pass and has put in place ways to improve subject and pupil results overall. For some pupils, attainment at entry in year 7, particularly reading, is poor. The school steps in to improve literacy and this has helped pupils do better in assessment tests at the end of year 9 and at GCSE. In 2004, pupils performed particularly well at GCSE in English and English literature, statistics, mathematics, biology, art, drama, design and technology and PE. The school has worked on narrowing the gap between how boys and girls perform, to good effect, for example, in English, but overall girls continue to out-perform boys. The achievement of minority ethnic pupils at GCSE is just below others and they do comparatively well in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieved within their predicted grades. At the end of year 9, attainment and achievement in English and mathematics are satisfactory when compared nationally and with schools in similar circumstances. In English, boys do better than boys nationally and girls do as well as other girls. In mathematics both groups are close but neither does well enough in science. There are some recent signs that science results are beginning to pick up. Pupils identified as requiring SEN support are achieving at or above their learning goals. Pupil monitoring and academic mentoring have identified a need for greater challenge in provision for talented pupils.

**Grade: 3**

## Personal development and well-being

The provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is good. The school provides well for pupils' moral, social and cultural development, although less well for the spiritual dimension. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. Good behaviour in lessons helps support effective learning, although on occasion low level disruption by pupils inhibits this. The staff supervise break times and the movement of pupils around the school well. Pupils are polite and courteous. Pupils say they feel secure in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Racial harmony is evident. Some parental and pupil comments indicated a possible concern over bullying. Inspectors found that there are appropriate procedures in place to manage any bullying, but that sometimes pupils find it difficult to counter some aspects of peer pressure. School managers will wish to continue to keep a close eye on this.

The school actively promotes healthy living and has achieved a Healthy Schools award. The quality of school meals has been improved. Many pupils make active contributions to life in school and in the wider community. The school council represents pupils well and suggestions are acted on by school managers. Pupils are involved in a range of charity work locally and for other countries, such as a link with an African village. The skills and understanding pupils need for employment develop well during their time in school. There is a good range of strategies in place to monitor and tackle low attendance. Despite this, high levels of parental condoned absence make it very difficult for the school to meet its targets. The poor attendance of a significant number of Year 11 pupils results in them not achieving as well as expected.

## Grade 2

# Quality of provision

## Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding class and individual teaching. The school is aware of the variations in subject departments' examination and test results. Teachers are paired up to coach one another and share good practice across subjects. This works effectively, for example with English, art, design technology, physical education and drama leading the way. Additionally, training focuses on improving the weaker aspects of teaching and classroom organisation which have been identified.

Teachers and managers have improved how they monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. Pupils are set targets and teachers keep them in the picture about how they are doing. This helps encourage positive attitudes to learning. In lessons that are good, pupils are motivated by activities that intellectually stimulate. Subject teachers use different resources and varied tasks to challenge and engage pupils. As a result, pupils develop the skills they need to convey what they know clearly and confidently. For example, a history teacher used information and communication technology (ICT) well to draw together pupils' contributions to group discussions. In a good year 7 English lesson, pupils openly discussed the theme of friendship related to a novel they had been reading. Generally, teachers create an atmosphere in which pupils manage their behaviour appropriately and so teaching and other pupils' learning are not interrupted. Some teachers are more successful than others in meeting the diverse learning needs of pupils. Where work is well matched effectively, more able pupils are challenged and stretched while those with specific learning needs can contribute positively to discussion, group and class work.

The less successful lessons are when teachers have too low expectations of what pupils know and can do and where the lesson planning does not cater well

enough for everyone's needs. A key factor that encourages inattentive and poor behaviour from some pupils is a lack of pace and challenge. Sometimes, classroom organisation could be better. These factors adversely influence pupils' attitudes to learning. Where teachers do not manage the learning or spend too much time in talking either above or below pupils' levels of understanding, pupils show less interest in learning and a few get involved in low level disruption instead.

### **Grade 3**

#### **Curriculum and other activities**

Curriculum provision is satisfactory, with some good features. An extensive range of extra- curricular opportunities, especially in sport and drama enhances pupils' experience. Pupils in year 9, for example have reached the regional final of a business enterprise competition. Activities are enjoyed and enthusiastically supported. In years 7 to 9 pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. In years 10 and 11 there is a clear focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT. The school's investment in ICT is increasing pupils' motivation. Pupils are keen to use the significant resources before, during and after school. They are enthusiastic and articulate about how ICT is helping them learn better. There is a wide range of GCSE subjects but opportunities for pupils to study alternative qualifications are less developed.

While the curriculum pathways meet the needs of many, they may restrict choices and access to vocational education later on for a large number of pupils. The school is working to improve this. In discussion, pupils said they were generally content with the curriculum but some are concerned about the lack of flexibility. When choosing subjects for years 10 and 11, pupils are very dependent on the guidance given by teachers. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory overall, though it is not sufficiently clear exactly how such pupils are identified and there needs to be more dialogue with parents over what is then provided. There are good opportunities given for pupils to exercise responsibility and to contribute to the school and community. This is a strength of the school's provision. Pupils are justifiably proud of the well- established, effective peer counselling support they provide for each other and for their charity fundraising efforts.

### **Grade: 3**

#### **Care, guidance and support**

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for pupils transferring from primary to secondary school are effective. As a result, pupils have a sense of belonging and soon settle to the new expectations and demands. Care and support for vulnerable young people is sensitive and responsive; for example, children with low reading ages at the point of entry are tutored and as a result

reading ages improve, helping them to cope better in lessons. The needs of pupils on the SEN register are well supported with specific provision. Pupils say they feel safe and secure on site and are aware of the systems and procedures for support. Most pupils are confident in discussing work problems with teachers and mentors. There are clear procedures for Child Protection with identified responsible staff and training. Parents are regularly consulted and the school makes significant efforts to seek their views and involve them in school life.

**Grade: 2**

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior managers have developed sufficiently clear roles to ensure a coherent approach to line management responsibilities across the school, especially related to improving pupils' attainment. This work is supported well by accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school managers use performance data appropriately and act on relevant information from pupils' and parents' questionnaires. The school is served well by its staff. The leadership team has correctly identified the areas for development, including underperforming subjects, and most have suitable success measures that help the school identify whether it is moving these forward. Inclusion of pupils, especially the most vulnerable, is an appropriate key theme. The quality and style of subject-planning is inconsistent. Senior staff recognise this, but action is needed to bring about greater coherence. Middle managers are well-informed about key improvement areas and whole-school initiatives, such as assessment for learning. The governing body is developing a greater understanding and appreciation of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, through active involvement in a range of school priorities and actions, and undertakes its wide range of responsibilities with all reasonable effort. It does not meet the requirement for collective worship, but meets other regulations. Funds are managed effectively and resources used well, especially in using ICT to enhance teaching and learning across the curriculum. The school achieves satisfactory value for money. Improvements in leadership and management have been made across the school since the previous inspection, which makes for good capacity for future improvement.

**Grade: 2**



**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about HMI-led Ofsted inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</b>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
---	-----------------------	--------------

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	<b>n/a</b>	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	<b>Yes</b>	<b>n/a</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	<b>Yes</b>	<b>n/a</b>

**ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	<b>3</b>	

**PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING**

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>2</b>	
The behaviour of learners	<b>2</b>	
How well learners enjoy their education	<b>2</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	<b>2</b>	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	<b>2</b>	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	<b>2</b>	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	<b>2</b>	

**THE QUALITY OF PROVISION**

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>

## Annex A

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	<b>2</b>	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	<b>2</b>	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	<b>2</b>	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	<b>3</b>	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	<b>2</b>	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are educated about sexual health.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	<b>Yes</b>
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	<b>Yes</b>
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	<b>Yes</b>
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	<b>Delete as appropriate</b>
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	<b>Yes</b>
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	<b>Yes</b>
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	<b>Yes</b>
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	<b>Yes</b>

Alexandra House      T 0207 421 6800  
33 Kingsway          F 0207 421 6707  
London WC2B 6SE      [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



Southmoor community school, mathematics and ICT college  
Ryhope road  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear  
SR2 7TF

4<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for contributing to the recent inspection of your school. We were able to visit lessons and to talk to a number of you. We also read the results of questionnaires done by you and by your parents. These were very helpful to us.

Here is a summary of our main findings which I hope will be of interest to you.

- The school provides you with a satisfactory education, with many strong points. The headteacher leads and manages the school well, assisted by her senior leadership team. They have a clear idea about what the school does well and how it could be improved and are going about doing this in an effective way.
- Standards in examinations and tests are improving and are now around what we would expect to see in a secondary school. Last year there was a noticeable improvement. Overall, we can see you make satisfactory progress at school.
- Teaching in the school is satisfactory. Some of the lessons we saw were good and occasionally they were outstanding. Your headteacher is making sure that the teachers share good ideas about teaching and learning with each other so that lessons are getting better.
- We feel that the school cares for you well, supporting and guiding you in your education. There is a satisfactory range of subjects for you to study but not enough vocational courses. You could have a greater say when making your choices at the end of year 9. We asked about bullying and we can see that there are procedures in place to deal with this when it occurs. We urge you to continue to follow these and we have also asked the school to continue to keep a close eye on this. We were pleased to hear you say you feel safe at school.
- The school provides well for your personal development, for example for your social, moral and cultural education and there is a good range of activities for you to get involved in outside lessons. There are also good opportunities for taking on responsibility.

- We found you to be polite and helpful on our visit. Usually your behaviour was good. When it was not, we could usually see a link between this and the quality of the lessons. Let me explain this: when you were interested and challenged and the lessons went at a quick pace then you stayed motivated. Otherwise, sometimes one or two of you tried to disrupt lessons. The school is working hard to make your courses and lessons relevant for you and is making changes, so it's up to you to try too to show that you are keen to learn and will also let others learn.

We have asked the school to improve the following:

- results in science
- GCSE results in some subjects, because some do much better than others
- attendance: it's unsatisfactory - despite the school's best efforts to make sure you all attend, some of you are still missing too many days, often without a good reason and this affects everyone's progress
- the range of courses apart from GCSEs
- to continue its good work on improving teaching.

We feel the school has improved since the last inspection and that, with your support it is now well placed to be able to continue to improve in the future.

Mrs H Gordon, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector of schools