



# Cottenham Village College

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110867  
**LEA** CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA  
**Inspection number** 278538  
**Inspection dates** 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Alan Clamp HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	High Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		CB4 8UA
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01954 288944
<b>Number on roll</b>	970	<b>Fax number</b>	01954 288949
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr. John Harradine
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. A Cooper

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11 to 16	14 June 2006 - 15 June 2006	278538

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Cottenham Village College is a mixed 11 - 16 community school with 970 students. Approximately 50 of these students have moderate to severe behavioural difficulties and attend the Student Centre within the school. The school also has provision for around 30 students with hearing and language difficulties. From September 2003 the school has been designated as a Specialist Mathematics and Computing College. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Approximately 9% of students are from minority ethnic groups and few students have English as an additional language. The proportion of students that have learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than the national average.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The overall effectiveness of the school is good and some aspects of the provision are outstanding. The school has taken effective steps to promote improvements since the previous inspection. Standards have improved in English and test results in Year 9 and Year 11 are now above the national averages. Strengths in the provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities have been maintained. They make outstanding progress. Students make good progress overall and achieve above average standards. The personal development and well-being of students are good. Teaching and learning are also good. The school has recognised the need to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning and to monitor students' progress more rigorously. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of students very effectively. The needs of the broad ability range of students are met well, although a greater range of vocational options is required for students aged 14 to 16. Care, guidance and support for students are outstanding. The leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership itself is outstanding. The way the school involves the students in all that it does is also outstanding. Quality improvement arrangements are good overall but on occasions more thorough and rigorous evaluation of the work of the school is required to maximise the effectiveness of these arrangements. The school's value for money is good. The specialist status of the school has contributed to higher standards, better resources and improvements in teaching and learning. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is comprehensive and largely accurate. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the school's self-evaluation, but did not agree that the overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding. The capacity of the school to improve is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase the sharing of good practice within the school in order to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning. - Establish more rigorous monitoring of students' progress. - Increase the range of vocational options available to students aged 14 to 16. - More rigorously evaluate the performance of the school.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that achievement and standards are good. The overall test results in 2005 for Year 9 students were significantly above the national average. The standards achieved in English have improved since the previous inspection and were significantly above the national average. Test results in mathematics and science were similar to the national averages. The proportion of students attaining the equivalent of at least five GCSEs at grades A\* - C, including English and mathematics, was significantly above the national average. The school sets itself appropriately challenging targets. The school exceeded its targets for the proportion of students achieving level 5 or above in Year 9 National Curriculum tests.

It also slightly exceeded its target for the proportion of students achieving the equivalent of at least five GCSEs at grades A\* - C, but it did not quite meet its target for overall standards in Year 11 examinations. The attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 7 is broadly average. Over the last two years there has been a significant increase in the proportion of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties entering the school during Key Stage 3 and being entered for the Year 9 tests. Students' overall rate of progress made between Years 7 and 9 has declined during this period and in 2005 it was similar to the national rate of progress. The overall progress made by students between Year 7 and Year 11 is good. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The provision for students' personal development and well-being is good. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation. During their time in school, most students mature into confident, polite and tolerant young adults, who are keen to make a positive contribution to life. Students enjoy being at school. There is good participation in extra-curricular activities, including a range of sports. Attendance is broadly similar to the national average. The behaviour of students is good. Behaviour is slightly better in lessons than around the school. The number of exclusions is very low and this reflects the school's strong commitment to include everyone and to maintain the continuity of students' education. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However, the emphasis given to spiritual development is insufficiently well identified in lessons. Students show good consideration for others and relationships with staff are very supportive. Students have a strong sense of fairness and of keeping safe and the school has a clear ethos of mutual trust and respect. Students respond positively to the variety of opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities. For example, students in Year 10 take part in a wide range of community based activities. Students are imaginative and generous fundraisers for charity. The student forum has successfully helped to improve the healthiness of food available in school. The progress students make in their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, allied to their ability to work well together, provide a good basis for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a greater proportion of good or better teaching than reported at the time of the last inspection. Where students make the best progress, specialist teaching is enthusiastic and enables students to work effectively on their own or in groups. Students who have plenty of opportunities to play an active part in lessons find this very motivating. Students are expected to think for themselves and to assess their own progress. Strong relationships between staff

and students give them the confidence to ask questions and take personal responsibility for their learning. The best teaching challenges all students to do well. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and for the most able students, is particularly effective. There is high quality support from knowledgeable and experienced teaching assistants. The less successful aspects of teaching and learning include too little emphasis on the way lessons are organised, a pace that is too fast for effective learning, and planning that takes insufficient account of the full range of students' abilities. The assessment of students' work is good with outstanding practice in several areas, particularly in the humanities. The school recognises the need to improve its monitoring of students' progress overall. New systems to address this issue are currently being developed.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good and it has some outstanding features. Provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. The curriculum in the Student Centre, for example, encourages good attendance and is highly motivating for students with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. High quality provision for students with hearing and language difficulties also enables these students to make rapid progress. The learning needs of the students of all abilities are met very effectively overall. Enrichment opportunities are outstanding and include a wide range of residential visits. The school is aware of its current narrow range of vocational courses in Years 10 and 11, but there are suitable plans to widen this provision from September 2006. There is a good range of relevant topics planned for the personal, social and health education days. The school does not provide a daily act of collective worship, nor does it comply with the reporting arrangements for citizenship.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for students. Procedures to ensure health and safety are very good. Arrangements to support vulnerable students and promote child protection are excellent. Staff are sensitive to the individual needs of students. They use a wide range of external agencies to add to their own expertise when offering guidance. The school has very effective links with its primary schools and local providers of further education and training. The induction and support arrangements for students entering Year 7 are a particular strength. Year 6 pupils from primary schools get the opportunity to spend a week at the school. The students greatly appreciate this opportunity and feel that it prepares them well for secondary school. Students value the teachers' willingness to give up their time to explain things further or provide enrichment activities. Students receive very good guidance on choosing options in Year 9 and comprehensive guidance on further education, training and employment.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good overall with a number of significant strengths, and leadership is outstanding. The headteacher leads the school very well. The school has improved significantly and its capacity to improve further is good. All staff share a clear vision to care for the students and provide for their needs as they move on to the next stage of their lives. The school self-evaluates well. Monitoring strategies are in place to further develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of the provision. However, the analysis and evaluation of some of this information lacks sufficient depth and rigour. The school has recognised the need to improve the collection and use of data to improve its work further. The inclusive nature of the school is outstanding. All students are respected and have opportunities to achieve well. Support for students with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly strong. The school has made good progress against its targets as a specialist college. The specialist status has had a positive impact on the school. Links with other organisations are outstanding. Standards have improved and new ICT resources have been used to improve teaching and learning. Governors share the vision of the school, are correctly proud of its inclusive nature and are supportive. They are prepared to debate vigorously in order to reach decisions and are seeking ways to be further involved in the life of the school. Parents are also supportive and are appropriately involved in the work of the school. The school's financial management is secure and value for money is good. Staff are suitably qualified and experienced. They are very well supported and benefit from a good range of development opportunities.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### 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>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

On behalf of the inspectors who visited Cottenham Village College on the 14 and 15 June, I would like to thank you for introducing us to your school. We enjoyed the opportunity to share your achievements and talk to you. Many of you helped us find our way around and made us feel welcome. We think that you might like to know our view of the school. What we liked about your school: - you make good progress and achieve above average test and examination results - your personal development and well-being are good - teaching and learning are good - you take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities - you receive outstanding care, guidance and support within the school, particularly those of you with learning difficulties and disabilities - the school is very well led - the school caters for students with a wide range of abilities in an environment of mutual trust and respect. What we have asked your school to do now: - increase the sharing of good practice within the school in order to improve the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning - establish more rigorous monitoring of your progress - increase the range of vocational options available to those of you aged 14 to 16 - more rigorously evaluate the performance of the school. The school is good with some outstanding features and is in a good position to make further improvements. The school has high hopes for the future and it will need you to play your part. We wish you every success.