



Vale of Catmose College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120290
LEA RUTLAND LEA
Inspection number 280786
Inspection dates 23 November 2005 to 24 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Cragg LI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Cold Overton Road
School category	Foundation		LE15 6NU
Age range of pupils	11 to 16		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01572722286
Number on roll	740	Fax number	01572724429
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Tom Allen
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Peter Green

Age group 11 to 16	Inspection dates 23 November 2005 - 24 November 2005	Inspection number 280786
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors, three Additional Inspectors and a Child Care Inspector.

Description of the school

The Vale of Catmose College is a mixed 11-16 Foundation comprehensive school serving the town of Oakham and the surrounding area. With 740 pupils on roll it is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average as is those with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is broadly average. More pupils have SEN statements than average and the college has specialist provision for 15 pupils. The college has had specialist Arts status since 2002 and has established an art gallery and theatre as part of its facilities. It has been a central school for Rutland's extended services since 2004. Full day care is offered to 28 children. The college also provides educational and recreational opportunities for adult learners.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The college provides good education overall. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards are above the national average and pupils make progress at least in line with and often above national expectations. Results in 2005 show clear improvement at both key stages. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils generally take pride in the college and behave well in lessons. They participate enthusiastically in the very wide range of activities available to them and willingly take responsibility where opportunities are provided. Teaching and learning are good overall. The best teaching is outstanding and represents practice which should be shared across the college. In a small number of lessons, pupils were not encouraged to take an active part in their learning and the pace of teaching was too slow. Curriculum provision is good. There is a good range of courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The college's specialist Arts status makes a significant contribution to pupils' experience and personal development. There are very good links with other schools, colleges, employers and external agencies. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Pupils with special needs are valued and receive good support. All pupils receive good care and guidance from pastoral staff. The college's tracking of pupils' progress and involvement in activities is good and contributes strongly to the quality of guidance. Leadership and management at all levels in the college are good. The principal and senior staff establish a clear vision for the college which is strongly directed towards raising standards, increasing progress and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The college has good practice which should be shared between staff more regularly to further increase the pace and quality of improvement. Inspectors confirm the college's assessment of its own performance. The college has taken effective steps to address the main issues from its last inspection and there is good capacity to improve further. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning through the consistent application of the college's criteria for good teaching. - Provide pupils in all lessons with regular opportunities to be actively involved in and take responsibility for their learning. - Implement rigorous and consistent systems for staff to share the outcomes of evaluation and examples of best practice in teaching, leadership and management.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The overall achievement of pupils is good. Pupils enter the college with attainment which is broadly in line with that found nationally. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve standards which are good and were significantly above average in English, mathematics and science in 2004 and 2005. By the end of Year 11, standards are also good. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more higher GCSE grades in 2004 was above the

national average and improved again in 2005. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more pass grades was slightly below the national average in 2004 but improved to above the national average in 2005. Overall pupils' progress is good. In 2003 pupils at all levels of attainment on entry made good progress by the end of Year 11. In 2004, the progress of pupils in Year 11 was slower than in Years 7 to 9 overall with some underachievement, for example, by lower attaining boys. However, the college identified these issues and progress in 2005 improved and was good overall. Pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities and English as an additional language make at least satisfactory progress. The college sets challenging targets for pupils based on accurate analysis of assessment data. Pupils' progress is monitored effectively and they generally reach their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils are proud of the college and they enjoy taking part in the wide range of activities it has to offer. In particular, pupils gain confidence through the regular opportunity to take part in sporting, cultural and artistic events. Pupils have good attitudes, behave well during lessons and most are well motivated and interested in their learning. A small number of parents expressed concern about behaviour in the college. Inspectors found behaviour overall to be good but a minority of pupils were noisy when moving around the extensive site between lessons. The college, however, provides a safe and inclusive environment in which to learn. Attendance is generally in line with the national average and unauthorised absence is low. Pupils are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle through regular sports activities and the good provision for healthy eating. The college's policy on bullying is understood by staff and pupils alike and any issues are dealt with effectively. The college council successfully enables pupils to contribute to the community, and most pupils are confident that their views are valued and acted upon. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. During lessons pupils reflect on a range of issues. They develop a good sense of social awareness within a strong moral framework, and good enterprise skills through the provision for careers education and citizenship. Pupils learn to respect and appreciate the richness of a multicultural society through their study of religion, art and music from around the world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Inspectors' judgements of teaching closely match the conclusions reached by the college's leadership team in their monitoring of lessons. In most lessons pupils are well behaved and motivated, showing interest in their learning. These lessons are planned in detail and have clear learning outcomes. They are lively, progress at good pace and actively involve pupils in learning

through a good variety of activities. In these effective lessons, pupils make good progress. However, a small number of lessons, although satisfactory, do not fully engage pupils and, therefore, they make less progress. In these lessons learning outcomes are not clear enough and pupils are not encouraged to learn through applying their understanding or working with others. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and assist pupils with special educational needs to make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers' marking of pupil's work is regular and provides good advice on what they should do to improve their achievement. The college has introduced an electronic system for recording pupils' assessment results against their targets. Teachers use this information to track pupils' progress and to plan teaching to meet the needs of individuals. However, this is not yet fully effective across the college. Pupils and their parents receive good information on progress through reports and attendance at progress review days.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The college has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection report and has made good progress in most areas. The range of opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good and has expanded considerably through liaison with local colleges. The needs of learners, including those with learning difficulties, are now well met by a broad range of courses including vocational options. The college plans to provide religious education fully to pupils in Years 10 and 11 in 2006 but currently it does not meet statutory requirements. The college's Arts specialist status has a very good impact on the life and work of pupils. Its involvement with the community and the range of extra-curricular activities open to pupils are impressive. Of particular note is the part played by the college's art gallery in bringing a new dimension to the college and helping to widen pupils' horizons. Music and sporting activities are also both strong.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils are well cared for through the close monitoring of their progress by tutors and pastoral managers. Pupils' assessment results and their participation in college activities are carefully recorded and used effectively to inform tutors about the pupils in their care. Pupils' personal and academic development are supported well. There are good procedures to identify pupils who may be at risk and effective individual support is provided by a committed staff. The learning support base provides a good level of individual support for those pupils who find learning difficult and this helps them to make good personal progress in life skills. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust and the college follows good procedures for the protection of children and the monitoring of health and safety issues. Relationships between tutors and year groups are good and the majority of pupils feel that there are adults they can talk to and from whom they can seek help. Pupils are well supported when making their subject choices and the college

works very effectively with the Connexions service to provide pupils with comprehensive careers guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The principal provides a clear vision for the development of the college and is strongly supported by the experienced leadership team. There are good procedures for monitoring the performance of the college, evaluating progress, identifying key areas for development and drawing up relevant plans. The views of pupils and parents are sought through surveys and the results are analysed to inform the college's development plan which is detailed and highlights appropriate priorities. There is strong commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning which has led to better results and improved progress in key subjects and across the college in 2005. The principles of inclusion are very strong at the college and the interests and needs of all pupils are equally valued and well met. The leadership and management of staff responsible for subjects and year groups is good overall. Middle managers have a good understanding and awareness of the quality of work in their area of responsibility. Their planning for improvement is satisfactory overall and good in some cases. Monitoring is thorough but aspects of good practice might be shared more regularly and consistently across the college. There are good, productive links with local schools, colleges and other agencies which benefit pupils and widen their opportunities. Staff are suitably qualified and effectively deployed. Resources are managed efficiently and improvements have been made to facilities in key subject areas since the last inspection. The college's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and confirmed by inspectors. Almost all the key issues from the last inspection have been successfully addressed and the college has demonstrated the capacity to identify areas of weakness and to bring about improvement. Governors are committed and have a detailed understanding of the college's performance. They increasingly hold the principal and senior staff to account.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

As you know, your college was recently inspected and this letter is to tell you about the results of the inspection. However, first I would like to thank you all, on behalf of the inspection team, for your help and honest comments during our visit. We recognise that the college was very busy on the two days we were with you but feel that you responded very positively. Your opinions have helped us and we were impressed with your maturity and support for the college. The inspection found that your college was good overall. The results you achieve in tests and examinations are above the national average. You make progress which matches the national average and is improving. In lessons you behave well although a small number of you are noisy as you move between lessons. You generally get on well with each other and you told us that any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. You participate enthusiastically in the very wide range of activities which the college provides and we felt that music, sport and the arts were especially strong. Teaching is mostly good and in the best lessons you are encouraged to learn actively and you respond with interest and enthusiasm. You have a good idea of your target levels and grades and teachers give you good advice on how to improve in their marking of your work. There is a good range of courses available to you in Years 10 and 11. There are good links with local colleges and employers. Teachers provide good advice on careers and generally care well for you. You take on responsibility when given the opportunity and most of you felt that the student council acts on your views. There are some parts of the college's work which need to improve. We saw some very good teaching but feel that lessons could improve further if all teachers used the college's agreed approaches consistently. We also want all teachers to use methods which encourage you to learn through activities and take more responsibility for your own learning. We are sure that you would respond well to this because you told us that you learnt best in this type of lesson. We felt that there were very good examples of teaching and management in the college which needed to be shared more widely so that all staff could learn from the best practice. We are confident that your school can continue to improve. We wish you well in the future.