



# Uppingham Community College

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 120312  
**Local Authority** RUTLAND  
**Inspection number** 291700  
**Inspection dates** 20–21 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. Paul Brooker HMI

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

|  |                    |                         |                          |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Comprehensive      | <b>College address</b>  | London Road              |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Foundation         |                         | Uppingham, Uppingham     |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 11–16              |                         | Oakham, Rutland LE15 9TJ |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed              | <b>Telephone number</b> | 01572823631              |
| <b>Number on roll (college)</b>            | 848                | <b>Fax number</b>       | 01572821193              |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body | <b>Chair</b>            | Mr. Rob Sawyer           |
|  |                    | <b>Headteacher</b>      | Mr. Malcolm England      |
| <b>Date of previous college inspection</b> | 26 February 2001   |                         |                          |

|                  |                         |                          |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Age group</b> | <b>Inspection dates</b> | <b>Inspection number</b> |
| 11–16            | 20–21 September 2006    | 291700                   |

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors. An inspection of the Upp-Starts Nursery took place at the same time. The nursery's inspection report is appended to this report.

## Description of the college

Uppingham Community College is a specialist technology college. It is popular and over-subscribed. Students are drawn from Uppingham and a wide rural area around the town. Although the catchment area is very mixed socially and economically very few students are eligible for free school meals. The students are very predominantly from white British backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. A nursery with up to 29 available childcare places is attached to the college and managed by its governors.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the college**

### **Grade: 2**

Uppingham Community College is a good school with some outstanding features. Inspection evidence confirms the college's assessment of its strengths and areas for development. Standards of attainment are very high and have improved steadily since the last inspection. Achievement is good because students make good progress in lessons and over time. The school's technology college status makes a good contribution to raising standards directly through its strong specialist provision and indirectly with its wider community links, including local primary schools. The college is a happy and caring community where all adults and students are valued. It provides outstanding care, guidance and support. The students' personal development is also outstanding. They attend well, very much enjoy school and develop as confident and considerate young adults. The good curriculum meets students' academic needs and provides them with an excellent range of wider opportunities. The college's many strengths are reflected in the overwhelmingly positive views of parents. The quality of teaching is good. Most teachers communicate very high expectations of the students; some teaching is outstanding. The students' excellent attitudes and behaviour enable them to contribute to the community and to flourish socially and academically. When students leave the college they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for later life. Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The college's senior leadership is well-established and effective. However, although systems are in place for monitoring the work of the college, they are not universally rigorous or effective. The cohesive staff and strong leadership have sustained good improvement since the last inspection and demonstrate very good capacity for further improvement. The college provides good value for money.

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

- Develop a more rigorous and systematic approach to monitoring provision, so that areas for improvement are addressed quickly and best practice is more effectively replicated.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

When students start at the college the standard of their work is generally above expectations for their age. All groups of students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress as they move through the college. Consequently, their results in national tests and public examinations are well above national average figures. This means that achievement is good. Standards have continued an upward trend since the last inspection. In recent years the college has exceeded its challenging targets. The most able students excel, particularly in mathematics and science, and yet in each of the last three years the college has also achieved the distinction of having 100% of Year 11 students gaining at least one GCSE. High standards and good achievement are evident across the curriculum. The college

has good data on student attainment which is properly shared with staff. Procedures for regular formal assessment of the students' progress are excellent in some areas of the curriculum but are underdeveloped in others. The college makes effective use of assessment data to identify specific strengths and weaknesses and to guide suitable intervention and support, for example with a mentoring programme for targeted Year 11 students.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development and well-being of students are outstanding. Students are proud of their college; they very much enjoy being a part of its life and value the opportunities that it offers. This is reflected in their good attendance and the high levels of participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. The students' moral and social development is exceptional: they place a high value on relationships with each other and with adults. Their behaviour is exemplary and their attitudes are excellent; they are articulate, pro-active and mature young people. The school's excellent work on anti-bullying ensures that students feel free from bullying or intimidation. Their spiritual and cultural development is good. Students are aware of and adopt safe practices and healthy lifestyles. They develop skills that contribute to their economic well-being through a wide range of activities and responsibilities. Students are regularly consulted and are closely involved with decision making in the college; their views clearly make a difference. The College Council is a highlight in this regard. There are many opportunities for students to develop as citizens and to make a positive contribution to the community, both within and beyond college. Many older students readily support younger ones in a variety of different ways and are keen to share their expertise for the good of others.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The college provides a very positive learning environment: relationships are excellent and teachers' expectations are high. Students find lessons interesting because teachers plan activities that involve them in learning for themselves, often working collaboratively; this contributes much to the brisk pace of lessons and to students' rapid progress. A feature of the outstanding lessons is that all students are challenged fully through activities matched very well to their abilities. In these lessons open questioning stimulates students to think creatively, to explain and speculate; one teacher urged students: 'Don't play safe, consider originality'. The college's programme of professional development has successfully focused on improving students' engagement in learning. The impact of the college's efforts to make better use of assessment data is, however, more mixed: the quality and effectiveness of marking are variable, and assessment information is

insufficiently used in some lessons to set challenging enough work for all students. Outstanding practice is evident in all aspects of teaching but could be shared more effectively in order to further raise its quality.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The broad and stimulating curriculum meets well the needs of the great majority of students. This enables them to develop a wide range of essential skills, although some students do not enjoy aspects of the core curriculum, such as the course in information and communication technology (ICT) for Years 10 and 11. The tremendous variety of additional activities and after-school clubs greatly enriches students' experiences, particularly in the creative and performing arts and in sports. A range of vocational routes to accreditation has been introduced through innovative and creative partnerships with other schools and colleges and with the local authority. Much has also been done to provide strong work-related and citizenship dimensions to the curriculum. However, although showing promise, many of these innovations are at an early stage of development and have yet to be evaluated or securely embedded into the college's provision. Students gain much from their work-experience placements in Year 10, and from opportunities provided by themed days, such as the recent Industry Day for Year 9.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The college provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its students. Staff are very effective in providing an inclusive, supportive and caring environment in which students develop as confident, mature and independent learners. There are comprehensive arrangements in place to monitor students' progress. Careers guidance is good. All health and safety procedures are fully in place and recent training means that all staff know and understand the arrangements for child protection. All other steps to ensure the safety of students are systematically implemented; governors are involved through their regular visits to the college. The guidelines for safer recruitment have been implemented in full. There are very effective links with support services for the most vulnerable students. Students are very well supported through the Student Support Centre and staff provide excellent individual guidance for the most vulnerable individuals and groups. This level of support is a powerful feature of the college. Arrangements for students new to the college and when transferring between stages in their learning are exemplary; staff and students are actively involved. Procedures for identifying and supporting students with learning difficulties and disabilities are very good and involve close communication with parents.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the college are good, with some areas where practice is outstanding. The college principal and governors provide a very strong lead in 'Making a Good School Better'. Leaders at all levels set clear direction and work well as a team and are well-focused on raising standards and promoting the personal development and well-being of students. There is strong commitment to ensuring that all students benefit equally from what the college provides. Middle and senior managers are developing mechanisms for the evaluation of all aspects of work in the college. However, this process is not yet sufficiently rigorous or systematic enough to ensure that all best practice is recognised and areas for improvement identified. Hence strengths in, for instance, one subject are not routinely shared in other areas which could benefit. Nevertheless, the college's self-evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is accurate. Governors are impressive in the way that they both provide critical support and hold the college to account. Links between the governing body and senior managers are strong, enabling governors to make a valuable contribution to shaping the work of the college.

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## Inspection judgements

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 1 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 1 |

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 2   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 1   |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets   | 2   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 2   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 2   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 1   |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?  | Yes |
| Does this college require special measures?  | No  |
| Does this college require a notice to improve?   | No  |

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

22 September 2006 Dear students Uppingham Community College, London Road, Uppingham, Rutland Thank you for the positive contribution that you made to our recent inspection. We were all most impressed by your warm welcome and the grown-up way that you all spoke with us. Your opinions were important in confirming what staff, parents and governors told us. We were particularly impressed with your: - high expectations and the very good quality of your work - participation in lessons and in the wide range of out-of-school activities - mature and responsible attitudes and the consideration that you show for others - excellent behaviour and proactive approach to life at the college. Uppingham Community College is successful and is always looking at ways to improve. One of its most obvious strengths is that it is a very caring place for you to work and develop as well-rounded young adults. You are well taught and are given a very good range of opportunities to learn and develop new skills and interests. The college is well led by the principal and senior managers, and you are fortunate to have such an excellent governing body. Although most of you work hard and make good progress, there is always room for improvement. Some of you told us about aspects of the curriculum that you found frustrating and we have shared these concerns with the college. In addition, some of the outstanding practice that exists in some parts of the college needs to be more widely replicated elsewhere. We have asked the college to look at ways of developing this so that more of your lessons are excellent. For example, some aspects of assessment and marking need to be strengthened so that your work is always suitably challenging and so that you are always clear what you need to do to improve. We wish you all every future success. Yours faithfully Paul Brooker Her Majesty's Inspector