



Montsaye Community College

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122052
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292306
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Joyce HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive	School address	Greening Road
School category	Community		Rothwell
Age range of pupils	11–19		Kettering NN14 6BB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 418844
Number on roll (school)	1081	Fax number	01536 418282
Number on roll (6th form)	137		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Michael Payne
		Headteacher	Susan Fennell
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–19	22–23 November 2006	292306

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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Montsaye Community College is a specialist languages and humanities college. It is a larger than average school with students drawn from the market towns of Rothwell and Desborough, and from the surrounding rural communities. Although the catchment area is very mixed socially and economically, very few students are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of students identified with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, although the number with statements of special educational need is average. Most students are from a White British background and most speak English as their first language. More boys attend the college than girls.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that is clearly focused on raising student achievement and improving the standard of education provided. Its leaders and managers have accurately assessed its strengths and areas for development.

Achievement is good because students make good progress both in lessons and over time. They are well cared for and supported by staff and their academic progress is very effectively monitored. Students in the sixth form identified support and monitoring by staff as defining features of their experience throughout their time at the college. Teaching is good and enables students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, to learn and make progress. However, in a minority of lessons teaching is not well matched to the students' needs because assessment information is not used as well as it could be. Most students enjoy their education and appreciate the many visits and additional activities that the college provides. However, on occasion, disruption in a few lessons adversely affects enjoyment.

Students are aware of what they need to do to stay safe and to lead healthier lifestyles. The provision for health education is good and students know about the dangers of, for example, smoking and drug abuse. They benefit from a wide-ranging physical education curriculum and also participate in a range of extra-curricular sporting activities. The college has ensured that the food available offers students healthier eating choices. Students contribute well to the community and are involved in various fund raising activities. The citizenship programme includes a range of visiting speakers from the community and helps students gain an understanding of the workings of society. Students have a growing understanding of their rights and responsibilities, although the college recognises the need to further develop the student voice.

The curriculum is good and enables students to develop skills and knowledge that will help with their future economic well-being. Many subjects enable students to develop team building skills and most enjoy the discrete information and communication technology (ICT) course. The range of courses offered is extensive, with vocational and work-related course options in Years 10 and 11 proving very popular with students. Specialist status has substantially enhanced provision in modern foreign languages where students experience a rich range of language courses. In both languages and in humanities, a considerable range of additional and extra-curricular activities enriches the curriculum offered and these have had a positive effect across the broader curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders provide clear leadership and direction, they frequently check on the college's work and the monitoring of performance is a strong feature of the college. Middle managers are effective in their roles although there are inconsistencies and best practices are not always shared. The students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory and are aided by the many external agencies that work in partnership with the college. The majority of parents and carers who responded through inspection questionnaires commented favourably about the college, although a few were concerned about the behaviour of

a small minority of students. Successful action has been taken to address the areas of weakness identified at the last inspection and the good progress that continues to be made demonstrates that the college has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form are satisfactory. The provision for GCE A-level courses is good and an appropriate range of courses is offered. However, the range of vocational courses and courses at Level 2 is limited. Teaching is good and students make at least satisfactory progress overall and achieve as expected. Leadership and management are good and continue to improve provision in the sixth form. The rate of improvement in students' average point scores per entry is significantly greater than the national rate.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make more effective use of assessment data in lessons to ensure that students receive work that is well matched to their capabilities, and motivates and engages them in learning.
- Improve the consistency of middle leadership by sharing best practices to bring about improvement.
- Develop the curriculum in the sixth form to provide greater choice and to better meet the needs and interests of students.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Achievement and standards are good in the main school and satisfactory in the sixth form. Students enter the college with broadly average levels of attainment although there are fewer higher attaining students than usually found. They make good progress throughout the college and consequently perform well in most national tests and examinations. This means that achievement is good. In 2006 national test results for Year 9, students show significant improvement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At GCSE, although standards declined slightly in 2006 they remain good with significantly more students achieving five or more A* to G grades than nationally and average point scores well above average. In the sixth form, results in 2006 for GCE A- and AS level courses were broadly comparable to national averages.

The college sets appropriately challenging targets for all students and has good data on student attainment which is properly shared with staff. Procedures for the regular formal assessment of students' progress are good in most areas of the curriculum. The college makes extensive use of assessment data at whole college level to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement and to guide suitable intervention and support strategies. However, the use of assessment data in lessons is not as well developed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The personal development and well-being of students are satisfactory with some good features. Attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their education, although in a minority of lessons disruption by some students adversely affects the enjoyment of others. Behaviour is satisfactory overall because some poor or inappropriate behaviour is not always effectively managed by a small number of staff and this detracts from the usual good behaviour and positive attitudes of many students. The few instances of bullying and intimidation that occur are dealt with effectively and students comment that they are confident in the way staff deal with these incidents. Students' awareness about health and safety issues is satisfactory and they adopt safe practices in lessons. Healthy lifestyles are well promoted and students frequently participate in sporting activities and support the college's emphasis on healthy eating. They are encouraged to make a good contribution to the wider community through fund raising for charity and taking part in a broad range of events outside of college. Good provision is made for students' moral, social and cultural development and this is effectively promoted through events such as multicultural projects. Although satisfactory, spiritual development is less secure. Students are well prepared for their future economic well-being and develop good basic skills in ICT, numeracy and literacy. They receive good guidance on future options. Personal development in the sixth form is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good in both the main college and the sixth form. Typically lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. Often these are shared with students, and help them to understand the purpose of the lesson and what is expected of them. Teachers generally use high quality learning materials that are effective at developing students' understanding. Questioning techniques are used well to engage students in discussion and this helps them to understand key concepts and develop their thinking. Many lessons are enhanced by the good use of information communication technology (ICT) to support learning and this motivates students and enables them to actively participate. In most lessons, as a result of good teaching, students make good progress. However, not all students, especially those at Key Stage 3, are sufficiently challenged in all lessons. In a small minority of lessons, where the teaching is dull and unimaginative, the pace of learning slows and students lose interest. As a result, low level disruption, which is not always well managed, can adversely affect the progress and enjoyment of the lesson.

The college has developed a wide-ranging assessment policy and attainment information is used well to set challenging targets. Most teachers encourage students by praising and rewarding hard work and merits are used extensively and effectively in motivating students to do well. However, the marking of students' work is inconsistent and assessment data is not yet used effectively in enough classrooms to differentiate learning. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are carefully monitored and are taught and supported well, so that they make good progress. However, liaison between learning support assistants and subject teachers to set specific targets for individuals to achieve is not sufficiently developed

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The college has been successful in developing a good curriculum that, whilst remaining balanced, has become increasingly stimulating to students. In Years 10 and 11 a wide range of courses offers flexibility and choice to meet the range of students' aspirations and capabilities. The vocational courses provided both internally and externally are good and provide valuable learning opportunities. Provision for ICT is good, as is education for health and economic well-being. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed throughout the curriculum. The programme of personal and social education is effective and leads to all students following the short course GCSE in citizenship. The wide variety of additional activities and after school clubs greatly enriches students' experiences. In the sixth form, the curriculum is satisfactory. The range of GCE A-level courses is appropriate but, as the college recognises, students would benefit from more vocational and applied courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The college provides good care, guidance and support for its students. Well established systems are used to help students settle quickly into Year 7 and to move through the college. The experienced staff in charge of the year groups are effective in providing a supportive and caring environment for most students. The college offers experienced counselling from trained staff and gives good support to the most vulnerable students. Good use is made of external services to provide support and guidance on health, careers and other issues. Child protection arrangements are robust and staff are aware of their responsibilities. Health and safety policies and procedures are in place and are satisfactory. The use of fixed term exclusions to deal with incidents of poor behaviour is effective and the number has reduced this term. Nevertheless, the college acknowledges the need to continue reducing the number of exclusions.

There are comprehensive arrangements in place to monitor students' academic progress. Heads of year are very aware of how well pupils are doing and are quick to take action if there are problems. Consequently, most pupils make good progress. Parents and

carers are frequently sent progress reports and there are a number of opportunities to enable parents to meet and discuss students' progress with staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and she is ably supported by a highly effective senior leadership team. There is a commitment to meeting the needs of students and to ensuring equality of opportunity. Middle management is good, although some inconsistencies exist and best practices are not shared extensively enough across the college. Procedures to monitor how well the college is performing are particularly thorough and aspects such as data management and analysis, and departmental review are outstanding. As a result of the strong processes of monitoring and evaluation, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Governors are well informed and are supportive. They are involved in planning for the college's development and in self-evaluation, and they discharge their responsibilities diligently. Prudent financial planning ensures that the college's funds are targeted carefully to meet its identified educational objectives. The provision of new technology and other resources to support learning are good, and the new buildings and sports facilities are particularly appreciated by the students. Staff are deployed appropriately and the college provides good value for money.

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	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
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	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

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 outcome of the inspection. Before I do, I would like to thank you all for your help during our visit. We enjoyed meeting you and your comments helped us form our judgements about your college.

Many of you told us that you thought the staff were helpful and they taught you well. Most of you said that the school was a friendly place and had lots of activities for you to do. You told us that you especially like the sporting facilities and using the computers within the college. Many of you also said that the food served is very nice.

We found that your college is good and the staff look after you and teach you well. Most of you make good progress and achieve high standards. Your progress is well monitored and you are given good advice and guidance. You have a good range of courses that prepare you well for later life. Your college has an effective leadership team that is committed to making the college a better place for you to learn.

We did find some areas that could improve further to make your college even better. These are:

- to ensure more of the work you do in lessons better motivates and engages you
- to offer a wider variety of courses in the sixth form
- to share best practices between heads of department and heads of year in the college.

You can help the college staff by continuing to concentrate and work hard in all of your lessons. We wish you well in the future.