

Manor School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122119
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	327640
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Ahson Mohammed

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	892
Sixth form	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jonathan Haddock
Headteacher	Linda Brooks
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2006
School address	Mountbatten Way Raunds Wellingborough NN9 6PA
Telephone number	01933 623921
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Age group	11–18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than average. It serves the community of Raunds and the surrounding areas of Stanwick, Chelveston and Ringstead. The school gained specialist Sports College status in 2003. The number of students on roll has risen in recent years and the school is currently oversubscribed. Most students are from White British backgrounds, with some 5% of students from other cultural heritages. The proportions of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are eligible for free school meals are both much lower than the national averages. Provision in the sixth form is through the East Northamptonshire College. The school provides a range of extended school activities both before and after the school day.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Manor School and Sports College is a good school. It has some outstanding features. For example, it works effectively in partnership with a wide range of other agencies and providers, including local schools and colleges. These partnerships promote students' well-being effectively and provide good value for money. The school strives successfully to ensure that every student succeeds academically and socially. As one parent, reflecting a typical view, commented, 'They have made a great difference to my son's learning, confidence and social skills.'

The school is beginning to benefit from good leadership and management. Clear direction by the school's leadership team ensures that students' needs are put first and, as a result, the school has a caring ethos. Students are lively and energetic, and they are developing into confident young adults with good academic and personal skills. Many choose to return to the consortium sixth form to continue with their education.

Students of all abilities achieve well to reach standards that are above average. They make good progress because teaching is good overall and they have positive attitudes to their learning. A key factor is an excellent curriculum that promotes good levels of achievement as well as enjoyment of learning. The pastoral system is highly effective and students receive valuable guidance and support. The school's specialism in sports has had a big impact on the well-being of individuals and in boosting the students' self-confidence. It has enabled the school to enrich its curriculum, extend its community provision and develop positive links with local schools.

Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their increasing attendance, which is well above the national average. Students feel safe, behave well in school and treat each other with respect. They say that bullying is infrequent and effectively dealt with by staff, which they believe has led to better behaviour in school. A small minority of parents raised this as a concern but there was no evidence during the inspection to support their views. Nevertheless, the school is alert to these concerns.

The school uses self-evaluation well to identify strengths and areas where it can improve. Governors are particularly well informed and supportive. They are active participants in the changes already implemented and hold the school to account effectively. There is an established system to monitor the quality of teaching and to review the work of departments, which incorporates targeted mentoring and support for less experienced staff.

School leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and most lessons are good, with some examples of outstanding practice. Staff are active in promoting a culture of high aspirations. The best teaching provides a wide range of creative and imaginative activities that really enthuse all students and develop their independent learning skills. However, this practice is not yet consistent, and in some lessons, students are insufficiently involved in their learning, which slows their progress and leads to off-task behaviour. Effective marking, which is useful for the students to know what they have to do to improve their work, is not applied consistently across the school. This results in much work that is not improved or completed, making it difficult to use as a learning record. In addition, some teachers' expectations about the quality and presentation of students' work are not high enough.

The leadership team has a very clear focus on raising standards and attainment even further. They have a sense of determination to do even better and ensure that all groups of students do well. The impact of the changes made so far shows that the leadership team has good capacity to make further improvements.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

Since the last inspection, there has been further improvement to the curriculum and it is now good. Students are able to follow a wider range of vocational and traditional courses. Standards are above average and students make good progress with their studies. Teaching is good overall. In an outstanding history lesson, highly motivated students, with some excellent support from the teacher, enjoyed a variety of experiences, such as assessing each other's work and developing their skills of learning and working independently.

Regular guidance and feedback from staff inform students about their personal progress, and help them to record and review their individual learning targets. Students say that they are supported well to achieve their ambitions and they receive good careers advice. There is a good range of additional curricular activities, including sports, in which many students participate. More students are continuing their education in the sixth form as they feel that they have built up positive relationships over the years. The impact of this has been that they are willing to support the work of the school by helping the younger students with activities related to their specialism. An effective consortium leader and management team ensure continuity and good communication between the schools. Attendance and retention rates are good and an increasing number of students go on to university or to other higher and further education providers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Share the pockets of good practice in marking students' work, so that all students are consistently given regular guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality and presentation of students' written work across the curriculum so that it provides an accurate record of their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Since 2006, standards had shown a decline. However, in 2008 this decline was halted and standards improved. The proportion of students attaining five or more A* to C grades in their GCSE examinations was above the national average. However, when English and mathematics are included, the results are below average. Through effective interventions, this decline has now been reversed so that the students currently in Years 10 and 11 are making good progress in these key areas of learning. Students of all abilities now achieve much more than in previous years. By the end of Year 9, standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Based on their average starting points in Year 7, this represents good progress by the time students leave school. This is largely due to good leadership driving school improvement by making further improvements to the curriculum and introducing greater rigour in the tracking of students' academic progress. The school sets challenging targets in all key stages and evidence shows that these are rigorously tracked. Achievement is outstanding in physical education (PE) because of the quality of students' learning experiences, driven by the school's specialist status. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students develop extremely well both morally and socially. Their personal, social, cultural and religious education provides excellent opportunities to learn a wide range of life skills. They

are happy and they clearly enjoy their learning. There is little racial intolerance; bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly and effectively where it occurs. Students' attendance is exemplary, helped by the success of the support given to those who would otherwise refuse to attend.

The school gives the students responsibility for making decisions through 'student voice' groups and the outcome is seen in the maturity shown in discussions with them. One Year 9 student was able to explain how their cultural awareness has developed through their education. There are opportunities to discuss this and other social issues in tutor groups. Many students act as mentors and instructors to support the learning of the younger students and pupils in the local infant and junior schools. Behaviour is good overall around the school and in those lessons that inspire and motivate. Students say they feel safe in school and know to whom to turn if they need comfort or help. Students are very well aware of the need for an appropriate diet and regular exercise, with large numbers taking part in the sporting opportunities that the school provides. All students are empowered to prepare for the workplace by being involved in team-building and problem-solving activities. Leadership qualities are developed through coaching and sports leadership courses and with everyday use of numeracy and literacy along with information and communication technology.

The school's specialist status in sport particularly helps students to develop leadership and teamwork skills and to have the opportunity to develop them in a wide range of sports. This augments other learning experiences that prepare them extremely well for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, with a few examples of outstanding practice. This contributes to the good progress that students make. Typically, teachers plan lessons well. The school has successfully placed an emphasis on promoting the quality and experience of learning by increasing opportunities for independent, pair or group work and using assessment information to share targets with the students and to focus them on developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.

Characteristically, relationships and behaviour in lessons are good, with students listening well to one another and respecting each other's views. They collaborate well, show positive attitudes to their learning and participate willingly in peer and class assessment opportunities. Lessons are generally structured well, with activities that are matched to the range of students' individual needs and clearly linked to learning outcomes. This enables most students to make good progress and enjoy their learning. In the best lessons, teachers challenge students to develop their higher-order thinking skills and make effective use of additional student or adult support to enhance the students' learning experiences. In some lessons, the pace is slow, and uninspired teaching causes students to lose concentration and interest. Low expectations and insufficient focus by a few teachers to monitor pupils' work rigorously result in students taking less care with their written work, which they are then unable to rely on as a secure reference point for consolidating their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum in the main school is outstanding. Specialist status has allowed the school to broaden its PE curriculum, which has resulted in markedly higher standards in its specialist subjects in both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. An impressive range of vocational courses and option pathways has been introduced which meet the needs, aspirations and interests of students very well. There are very good opportunities for students to develop their ability to learn independently. As a result, students often show that they are able to transfer skills from one subject to another. The extended curriculum provides extensive opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills; for example, the Young Apprenticeship Programme in which Year 11 students coach pupils from local primary schools is a direct outcome of the sports specialism. Students speak highly of the extensive extra-curricular provision, which is outstanding. The quality of the programmes and very high levels of participation result in excellent outcomes in students' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and concern for the welfare of individual students is at the centre of the school's caring and inclusive ethos. Students feel listened to and are confident to approach adults if they need help. Knowing that 'everyone in this school is always there to help you' was the response of a Year 11 student when questioned.

The school's arrangements for child protection and safeguarding students are robust, and health and safety procedures are good. The special needs coordinator and the learning support team contribute significantly to the good progress and growing confidence and self-esteem of a wide range of students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning to speak English as an additional language and potentially vulnerable students. Effective use is made of a wide range of external agencies to support these vulnerable students as appropriate. For example, the school's work with the hospital and outreach education service has successfully reintegrated a number of youngsters, offering them renewed hopes for success in life. In appreciation of the school's care of her, one student in Year 8 volunteered, 'They have put the life back in me that I needed and put a smile on my face.'

There are some good and developing systems for academic guidance and support offered through the leadership, house and tutor teams that result in students and their parents knowing the students' targets and their current performance levels. This contributes well to the students' learning. Inconsistencies in marking exist and teachers' comments in books often fail to give students sufficient guidance about how to improve the content or presentation of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team provide a very clear vision and direction for the school, which the staff share and understand. They are passionate and proud of the school's successes, yet still want to find ways of doing even better. The school's self-evaluation addresses all the key areas but focuses on provision rather than impact in some areas. Nevertheless, the management of change is good because the impact of

new ideas is monitored and evaluated carefully. One example is the 'criteria reference tests' which allow students to reflect on their progress regularly and the teachers to consolidate and enhance the learning.

The school promotes equality of opportunity for all through the range of provision on offer. As a result, all staff make a positive contribution to raising standards and achievement, are clear about their responsibilities and are held to account well. The school works well with a wide range of partners, including local schools and colleges. It undertakes good work in the local community and has carried out an audit of this work to promote community cohesion further. Students are made aware of national and global issues through the curriculum and enrichment activities. Governors have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are committed to making the school even better and provide an effective balance of support and challenge to the school. Issues identified during the school's last inspection have been tackled successfully. There are robust systems in place to ensure efficient day-to-day management. The school is well placed to build further on these improvements and to improve standards. It has a good capacity to improve further on the sound foundations that it has established.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
The behaviour of learners	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

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

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	1	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 May 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Manor School and Sports College, Wellingborough NN9 6PA

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you extended to us when we visited your school recently. We were grateful for the contribution you made to the inspection. We spoke to many of you in class and around the school and would particularly like to thank those students who gave up their time to speak with us. We were very impressed with your positive attitudes to learning and to each other.

We judged your school to be good. It also has some outstanding aspects. Your school is led well by a strong team. Your headteacher and senior leaders have established a school where you all feel valued and where you feel safe and enjoy your lessons.

There is good pastoral care and support available for each of you, whatever your circumstances. You told us how much you enjoyed the range of courses and all the other interesting opportunities you have beyond the classroom. The good teaching ensures that you make good progress and achieve well. As a result, you attain above average standards.

To improve the school further, we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make sure that your work is consistently marked so that you are aware of how to improve the content and presentation.
- have higher expectations of the quality and presentation of your written work so that it provides an accurate record of your learning which you can then use to recall your learning at a later date.

You can help by making sure you fully understand the lesson content and become more involved in your learning.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Ahson Mohammed

Lead inspector