

# Uppingham Community College

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120312
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rutland
<b>Inspection number</b>	339673
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Judith Matharu HMI

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	870
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr R Sawyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Turner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	London Road Uppingham Oakham
<b>Telephone number</b>	01572 823631
<b>Fax number</b>	01572 821193
<b>Email address</b>	Principal@ucc.rutland.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	11–16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 September 2009
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<b>Registered childcare provision</b>	Upstarts nursery
<b>Number of children on roll in the registered childcare provision</b>	54
<b>Date of last inspection of registered childcare provision</b>	Not previously inspected

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Three inspectors visited 31 lessons in the main school with one inspector inspecting sessions in the nursery. They held meetings with groups of students, key members of staff and governors. They observed the school's work and scrutinised the school's key documentation, including improvement plans, staff development activities, students' progress records, and monitoring and evaluation reports. They analysed the questionnaires from staff, students and the 182 communications received from parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress made by different groups of students currently in the school, and especially in mathematics
- how effectively teaching challenges students of all abilities
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in monitoring and evaluating its work and driving school improvement.

## Information about the school

Uppingham Community College is an oversubscribed, specialist technology college and is slightly smaller than the average secondary school. The very large majority of students are of White British backgrounds. The school has very few students who are eligible for free school meals, with the majority of students from economically and socially more advantaged households than found nationally. However, there is greater pupil mobility onto and off the school roll than found nationally. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is slightly higher than found nationally, but the proportion overall with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has held specialist technology status since 1995. It holds the International Schools Award, Artsmark Gold and Investors in People accreditations.

A nursery with up to 29 places is attached to the school and managed by its governors. The school also provides extensive adult learning and community sports opportunities.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

Since its last inspection, this highly successful school has sustained many aspects of excellent performance and improved further. The principal has pursued an unflinching focus on maintaining high standards and raising the achievement of all students. She has successfully reorganised many aspects of the school's work over the last two years, including the range and nature of curriculum provision and the re-organisation of the school day in order to provide an extensive enrichment programme for all students. The structure and nature of the leadership team has been revised in order to focus on the key priorities of developing aspects of teaching and learning and improving curriculum provision. These are important developments; it is highly commendable that previously noted strengths in terms of outstanding pastoral care, guidance and support and students' personal development and well-being have also been maintained to an outstanding level. The leadership team has a comprehensive, accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. It is aware of the challenges posed to staff from many recent changes and has generally managed this skilfully. There is a clear aspiration to improve teaching and learning to reach outstanding levels overall and recognition of the need to stretch all students, with a rigorous system of monitoring and reviewing lessons implemented to enable this. The atmosphere in school is highly positive and respectful with the vast majority of students demonstrating great maturity and self-discipline, enjoying excellent relationships with their teachers and their peers and expressing high levels of satisfaction with their experiences in school.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers plan for, and provide appropriate levels of challenge for students of varying abilities in their lessons. This is to fully engage and stretch all students, particularly the most able and accelerate their progress.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Standards are consistently high and well above national averages in every respect over recent years. Attainment on entry is variable, ranging from broadly average to just above average. Throughout the school, students greatly enjoy their learning and all groups of students, including those from vulnerable groups, make at least good progress. They consistently make particularly good progress in English, science and design technology; the school is implementing strategies to ensure that more able students achieve as well as they might in mathematics, as results here have not been as high as in the other core subjects. The school's tracking data and analysis of

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performance indicate that current students are making consistently good progress, and lesson observations at inspection endorse this.

Students' behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. The atmosphere in lessons and at social times is calm, respectful and industrious. This facilitates good pace to learning and successful outcomes in the vast majority of lessons. There is very little exclusion with no permanent exclusions last year. Students comment that they feel safe and bullying is extremely rare. They indicate that most of their peers behave responsibly and enjoy being part of their school community. Students resolve conflicts effectively using peer mentors who work independently, spotting and dealing with issues. Many speak with pride of various successes and contributions to school life across a broad range of activities. Students' personal and social development is enhanced significantly by many opportunities provided for them to assume a variety of leadership roles in school to support the work of their peers. They also make substantial contributions to local community activities in a variety of ways through sports leadership, charity fundraising and other school council activities. The increasing use of the pupil voice is a strength of the school; students have influenced a full range of policies through various consultations and appreciate that their voices are heard. They are suitably reflective and critical: for example, a number of older students feel that the school could do more to help them lead healthy lifestyles.

Students are very knowledgeable and aware of other cultures. They have a mature understanding of issues facing young people in other parts of the world. Strong international links with European schools and across the world effectively facilitate this, together with much thoughtful work in religious education and citizenship. The school has received an International Schools Award for its work for the past ten years.

Students are prepared admirably for their future working lives through the acquisition of very strong basic skills. Hardly any of them leave school without entering into further education, work-based training or employment.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>1</b>
	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Inspection confirmed the senior team's view that teaching is predominantly good across the curriculum with some of it outstanding. No inadequate teaching was observed during inspection. Thorough monitoring, including comprehensive department reviews involving extensive lesson observations, has informed the accuracy of the school's evaluations of teaching and learning.

Teaching is well organised by confident subject specialists. The pace of learning is good and students are keen and enthusiastic learners. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning is consistently effective. Most lessons engage students very well through a good variety of well-chosen activities. Relationships are warm and supportive and students clearly enjoy good rapport with their teachers. When teaching is outstanding, teachers engage students in high quality conversations about their work and accelerate their progress through carefully selected tasks, which fully meet the needs of all abilities in the group. This ensures that everyone in the lesson remains suitably challenged at all times. Occasionally, when teaching is satisfactory, such differentiation is less evident and progress slows unnecessarily.

The school continues to develop an innovative and imaginative curriculum and extra-curricular programme. The impact of developments in place at the last inspection is now clear - particularly the very good achievement through vocational courses for students who prefer this style of learning. Overall, the curriculum is outstanding in its breadth and inclusive nature. It is very well tailored to meet the needs of individual students with four distinct pathways available at Key Stage 4. A greater number than found nationally continue to study modern languages at Key Stage 4. Careful timetable design enables students to access courses elsewhere without losing time from their core subjects. Specialist status has had a positive impact in terms of widening the range of courses available, including AS level in Product Design. There are excellent opportunities for work-based learning, including the opportunity for work experience in Germany. Procedures to provide care for students' safety and well-being are exemplary. Highly effective work with partners and external agencies and well-coordinated interventions support vulnerable students, including those with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities with clear evidence of improved attendance, achievement and aspirations for these individuals.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The principal articulates a clear and convincing vision for the future of the school. She and the senior team display a determined commitment to continuous improvement in teaching and learning as the means to sustaining high performance. There is no complacency but a willingness to take firm action, even radical steps if required, in order to improve provision and ensure equal access and opportunity for all students. Consequently, a number of notable improvements have been achieved. Students appreciate the principal's visible presence around school, her frequent visits into lessons and that she knows many of them well.

Rigour has been introduced to systems to monitor and evaluate the school's work, providing clear, accurate information from which to plan improvement actions.

Imaginative use is made of internal and local resources to widen the curriculum, enrich students' experiences and strengthen the care and support available for them. In particular, safeguarding procedures are exemplary.

Subject and pastoral leaders make strong contributions to the success of the school. The middle leadership tier is clear about its roles and responsibilities in driving improvement and contributes strongly to the school's continued success through effective leadership of its teams. A shared sense of purpose is evident.

Governors demonstrate excellent understanding of the school's work and priorities. Their challenge and support for the school is highly effective in promoting and supporting continuing improvement.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. This is thoughtfully delivered through the extended school plan and reaches out to work with many local community partners. Through its work as an international school and with excellent links to schools abroad, students are also contributing well to the global community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for children entering the nursery. Excellent induction and welfare arrangements help children to settle and thrive in the warm and supportive environment. Consequently, children are extremely happy, confident, and eager to try out new things. Teaching is outstanding, demonstrating excellent relationships and an excellent balance between activities where children discover things for themselves and those where they work with an adult. The curriculum stimulates and encourages children to want to learn and is exemplary in responding to their individual interests. As a result, children make at least good progress in all areas of learning, irrespective of their starting points and leave the Reception class with knowledge, skills and understanding that are at least in line with expectations with a significant proportion attaining well beyond this. The 'free flow' use of both the indoor and the exceptionally well planned and exciting outdoor accommodation is good. This exemplifies the school's successful emphasis on the development of independence in selecting and carrying out activities. Children's behaviour is outstanding. They develop a love of learning and are confident and excited to explore the world around them. Assessment procedures are rigorous, providing accurate information to support planning, extend children's learning and identify appropriate intervention strategies for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The outstanding leadership and excellent teamwork provide a vibrant and exciting learning environment in which children are valued. Consequently, children get an excellent start to their education.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are generally highly supportive of the school. In the responses received at inspection, many wrote positively about their child's enjoyment of school life, their appreciation of the many opportunities available in a wide variety of activities and the excellent relationships evident. A number were very complimentary about the strength of transition arrangements and the highly effective pastoral care provided for individual students.

A small number of parents express concerns about communications with parents. They would like better information regarding their child's progress and how they, as parents, might support their child's learning. A similarly small number do not like the school's current system for reporting progress to parents.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Uppingham Community College to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 182 responses by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 870 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	33	67	37	8	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	53	28	78	43	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	13	81	44	18	10	6	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	20	71	39	16	9	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	37	20	83	46	8	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	14	74	41	21	12	9	5
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	18	88	48	11	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	36	20	83	46	4	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	18	79	43	12	7	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	18	76	42	15	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	15	72	4	17	9	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	21	83	46	10	5	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	26	75	41	8	4	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



28 September 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Uppingham Community College, Rutland, LE15 9TJ

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. It was a pleasure to observe your work and talk with many of you. Your views are important to us and we appreciated your honesty, courtesy and cooperation. It is very clear that most of you are proud of your school and really value the opportunities provided.

Our view is that your school provides you with an outstanding education and that you are right to be proud of it. Standards are well above average and the progress that all groups of students make by the end of Year 11 is good. Teaching is consistently good and the new curriculum on offer is wide and varied, providing excellent courses for students of all abilities and aptitudes. Your teachers and other adults in school know you well, care about your progress and do their best to meet your needs. They also try to ensure that you enjoy school life fully.

The school attaches great importance to developing your personal and social skills and preparing you for adult life. We feel that it is very successful in achieving this. The specialist technology nature of the school adds much in this respect and helps you to develop very good work-related skills for the future. In addition, your behaviour and attitudes to learning are first-class. Many of you are involved in the wider life of the school and told us how much you value the very wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities available to you.

Your school is extremely well led and managed. Your principal is a strong leader and an excellent team of staff and governors very ably supports her. The staff team is determined to continue improving things to ensure that you all continue to achieve as highly as possible. We have asked the senior staff to ensure that all of your teachers plan activities in lessons to stretch and challenge every one of you, especially those of you who find learning quite easy.

We feel sure you will continue to do well and look forward to hearing of your future success.

Best wishes,

Judith Matharu

Her Majesty's Inspector

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