

Montsaye Community College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122052
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340080
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Cartwright HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1195
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Scotney
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Fennell
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. Inspectors spent the majority of their time looking at learning, and saw 45 different teachers delivering as many lessons. Inspectors met with groups of students, governors, and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at records of student progress, school development plans and departmental reviews. Surveys of staff, pupils and 172 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- the quality of classroom provision, including the effectiveness of assessment practices
- the reasons behind the particular success of boys
- the impact of specialist school initiatives
- the processes the school uses to make judgements about its work.

Information about the school

Montsaye Community School is slightly larger than most secondary schools, and serves a small rural town. There is a lower than average proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals, and the school is in an area of higher than average economic prosperity. Most students come from White British heritage backgrounds. The proportion of students having special educational needs and/or disabilities overall is higher than average. The school has been a specialist language college since 2000, with a second specialism of humanities since 2004, and recently gained a third specialism in applied learning. The school is also a full service extended school.

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?**2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

This good school is at the heart of its community, with outstanding partnerships that benefit children, young people and adults associated with it. Good leadership at all levels is continually improving provision, with the versatile and effective curriculum at Key Stage 4 the primary reason for the school's academic success. The very large majority of students enjoy school life, and most learn well. Boys achieve particularly well, exceeding national expectations, because of their enthusiastic engagement with a curriculum containing many vocational opportunities. These choices for girls are now coming on-stream. Current standards of work are higher than previous years. The improved sixth form is attracting increasing numbers of students, and ensures most of them make better than expected progress. The swift and effective response to lower than anticipated GCSE results in 2008 further reinforces the good capacity for sustained improvement.

Students behave well in lessons and around the school. Most of them enjoy school and say they feel safe. The school is outstanding at securing the health and safety of students, staff and community users of its facilities, and it includes students in this process by educating them in safe working practices. It also involves students in self-review, so that the school knows and acts upon students' views. Together with very good arrangements for all students to contribute to supporting each other through vertical tutoring, their contribution to school life is outstanding. The impact of specialist modern language status shows in excellent languages standards and wide-reaching improvements in language teaching with partner primary schools. In applied learning, the school runs three of the new diplomas, alongside an expanding, and popular, programme of vocational qualifications.

Learning and progress in the majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good, and some lessons were outstanding. Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that teaching and learning are good. There are good-humoured relationships between teachers and students that create a positive learning ethos. A robust process of departmental review includes accurate lesson evaluations and a substantial student survey. The school monitors students' progress effectively. Teachers have good information about their students' prior attainment and any particular learning needs. Sometimes that knowledge is not used to assign appropriately challenging tasks from the outset of the lesson. Frequent formal assessments of students' work ensure no one is slipping behind. Many examples of day-to-day marking are clear and informative, but this practice is not consistent. Students do not always respond to good advice on how to improve their work.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Promptly improve the effectiveness of assessment for learning by:
 - using information about each student's prior attainment and capability to plan tasks that match their needs and interests from the outset of the lesson
 - establishing consistent day-to-day marking and feedback to students so they all know, and where possible carry out, the suggested improvements to their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students join the school with a wide range of attainment that, overall, matches the national average. Most students are currently making good progress, particularly boys. In English and mathematics, progress for the past three years has been high. In most lessons, pupils work hard and with good humour to complete the tasks assigned. Learning is at its best when students have responsibility for their own research and study, and opportunities to write and talk about their understanding. High expectations and demands from teachers are usually matched by high levels of responsibility and commitment from students. Those features are common to many of the vocationally based courses, and account for students' success. Learning is less effective when teachers tightly control each moment of the lesson, assign mundane tasks, or require students to complete the same task irrespective of ability, before providing extension activities as necessary. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because of well-organised arrangements to support individual students. Most are at the stage of school action. Students from White British and other heritage backgrounds achieve equally well.

Although a minority of students are not convinced of the effectiveness of the school's work to encourage healthy lifestyles, inspection evidence confirms that most do enjoy plenty of opportunities for sporting activity beyond the formal taught physical education curriculum. There is a high uptake of healthy food from the school canteen. Many students enjoy this facility, and they say the recent change to lunchtime arrangements has led to a more relaxed dining experience. Most students feel safe, and almost all say that the school deals effectively with bullying. In one or two cases, students, parents, and carers remained unhappy with the school's responses to their concerns relating to such situations. However, inspectors judge the support of the school for students in this situation to be good. There is a new student anti-bullying group, with trained student listeners and a very high anti-bullying profile around the school. There are low and sharply reducing numbers of serious disciplinary incidents. Attendance remains in line with national averages, and the best efforts of the school have reduced persistent absence towards local authority targets.

Most students take an active part in supporting one another across different age groups and welcome the change to vertical tutor groups. School councils have influenced improvements to canteen food, changes to school uniform, and appointments of staff.

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Together, the school raised a substantial $\pounds 4,500$ for Children in Need. The head boys and girls have started to attend governors' meetings, and other sixth form students work for the school as supervisors and sports centre assistants.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and course requirements.

Students are willing to contribute to lessons even though this may reveal misunderstandings and errors. In the best of lessons, teachers have high expectations and successfully enthuse students through imaginative use of good-quality resources, and good humour. Explanations are clear and brief. Teachers' skilful questioning helps students to improve their understanding and give fuller, more considered answers. Activities are varied, stimulating, usually well adapted to students' understanding and closely match the learning objectives. Students discuss their learning with confidence. However, satisfactory teaching occurs when knowledge of student ability is used inefficiently, resulting in the main lesson task not being matched to individual student needs. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities to deepen understanding, for example

¹ 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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through discussion.

The broad range of curriculum opportunities is well balanced and highly relevant to students' needs. Very good opportunities to enrich learning include a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, such as drama, design, sports activities, information and communication technology (ICT) and homework. These greatly enhance enjoyment, learning and self-esteem as seen for example, in drama. Parents and carers and students appreciate these extra activities and the commitment by staff to run them. The language and humanities specialisms are having a very positive impact on raising boys' achievements. Applied learning has resulted in an increased range of vocational and diploma courses, including widening choices for girls, which are appropriately designed to have an equivalent benefit on their outcomes alongside those of boys. The school has taken the lead among its educational partners in implementing diplomas in engineering and ICT.

Most students, and the large majority of parents and carers say the school keeps them well informed about progress. Arrangements for transfer from primary school, and to post-16 education are effective, and capitalise on excellent partnership arrangements with primary schools, local business, and further education providers. Students appreciate the high quality of careers guidance and almost all continue in education, employment or training after Year 11. Students whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive effective personalised programmes of study. Students value the one to one mentoring opportunities, and younger students value the role models and support of older students.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has effective review and evaluation systems that respond quickly and robustly to any dips in students' outcomes. From governors through to middle leaders, all know their role well, and all are rigorous and effective in carrying out their duties including statutory responsibilities. There is a palpable sense of energy, good relationships and team spirit driven by the headteacher's unswerving dedication to ensuring all students and staff achieve their best. The school knows its strengths and areas for improvement well. The school has exceeded its specialist language college performance targets. It has met many of the humanities targets, and is delivering the expected applied learning curriculum. Arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and

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well-being of school members and visitors are excellent, thanks to a realistic and proportionate approach. There is a strong focus on teaching young people about health and safety issues. Policies for ensuring equality of opportunity are systematically reviewed and adjusted. No individual or group is forgotten. The school provides many opportunities for students to develop an understanding of local, national and global communities. Governors meet with other colleagues from different local schools to discuss further developments of plans to improve already good community cohesion. The school is at the heart of Rothwell's public leisure services, and uses its excellent network of partnerships to good effect in broadening opportunities for learners. These include visitors and visits involving other cultures and a range of different faiths.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Sixth form

Good teaching with high expectations of students, and consistently effective use of assessment in lessons have an effective impact on learning and progress. As a result, many students are on course to exceed their predicted subject grades. Students make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community, for example as mentors and swimming coaches in school, and as sports leaders in primary schools. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection with more opportunities for students to participate in courses such as music, drama, dance and in vocational opportunities. Good guidance and support, for example the helpful transition day for Year 11 students and the effective system of mentoring, enable students to make more informed choices about higher education and careers. Good leadership has ensured valuable

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improvements to the curriculum, excellent partnerships with other providers and support for students, resulting in high numbers choosing to complete two-year courses.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers in the survey are happy with the work of the school overall. A small minority did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors recognised that some students occasionally misbehave, but that the frequency of serious incidents is low, and reducing through improving arrangements to support students prone to misbehave. The vast majority of young people at the school are keen to learn. A small minority did not agree that the school took account of their suggestions. The school is sensitive to this concern, and hopes that the recent changes to tutoring will improve the quality of contact between home and school over time.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Montsaye 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 inspector received 172 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	23	112	65	16	9	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	45	26	113	66	10	6	3	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	25	104	60	24	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	21	111	65	19	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	12	124	73	15	9	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	15	111	65	25	15	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	12	122	71	18	11	2	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)	26	15	115	68	10	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	14	129	75	14	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	14	98	57	34	20	7	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	8	111	66	28	17	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	18	11	118	69	20	12	5	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	20	119	69	12	7	5	3

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



22 January 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Montsaye Community College, Northamptonshire, NN17 6BB

Thank you for your warm welcome and good-humoured conversations during our inspection of your school. The school provides a good education that ensures almost all students continue successfully into further study or work when they leave. Your school is very good at developing partnerships with other schools and colleges, and local business. This has helped it develop a wide range of courses for you to follow at Key Stage 4. The recent change to vertical tutoring is working well, according to many of your comments, as is the 'rolling lunchtime' idea; you say eating and socialising is now calm and relaxing. We note that many students play an active role in helping to run the school, for example sixth form supervisors. The school also asks for your views regularly to help it adjust its teaching and curriculum to meet your interests. We recognise that sometimes a few students can misbehave, but we believe the school deals effectively with this. We were impressed by your politeness, positive contributions to lessons and good concentration, even where occasionally you found the tasks too easy.

We agree with the school that further improvements are possible, and these relate to how the school is using the information it gets from the regular assessments it makes of your progress. In some lessons, although teachers know you well and recognise that you each have different abilities, you often all start the same task. We think it would be better to start on the tasks best matched to your personal learning needs. Sometimes day-to-day marking of your class-work does not give you enough information on what to do to improve. Even when it does, some students are not correcting mistakes or completing the work. You can help by responding to the advice as soon as possible.

Best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Brian Cartwright

Her Majesty's Inspector

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