

Grobby Community College

Ratby Road, Groby, Leicester, LE6 0GE

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students make good progress across a wide range of subjects. They make exceptional progress in English, where standards are well above average.
- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at A* to C grades, including English and mathematics, is above national averages.
- Teaching is good and much is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge which they use to build students' understanding through probing questioning.
- Students enjoy being at college and behave well. They take part enthusiastically in lessons and treat each other with respect.
- Marking is used well to give students excellent guidance on how to improve.
- The sixth form is good. Students are making good progress as a result of engaging teaching and timely interventions if they fall behind.
- Senior leaders and governors have high expectations in all aspects of college life. They are uncompromising in their commitment to 'Achieving Excellence Together' and this vision is shared by staff and students.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a small number of lessons, not all students are fully challenged and some students do not find the work interesting enough.
- Students who are supported by additional funding do not attend as frequently as other groups.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons, seven of which were jointly observed with senior leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors also spoke with many students informally, in lessons and around the college.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including information on students' progress, college improvement plans, monitoring documentation and records related to behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 54 responses from parents and carers from the Parent View website, and the questionnaires completed for the inspection by 67 staff. They also considered the results of surveys of parent and carers carried out by the college.

Inspection team

Deborah James, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Huw Bishop	Additional Inspector
Robert McDonough	Additional Inspector
Frances Le Pla	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Groby Community College converted to become an academy in September 2012. When the predecessor college, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be satisfactory.
- The college is an average-sized secondary school.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of students for whom the college receives additional funding through the pupil premium (additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or those who have a parent in the armed forces) is lower than average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below national averages
- The college meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' progress and attainment.
- Two students in Years 11 undertake full-time alternative courses through the Leicestershire Commissioning and Personalised Programmes Scheme (C&PPS)

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate the small minority of teaching that requires improvement and increase the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - planning work that is always closely matched to different ability levels of all students in the class and providing activities that stretch the most-able students
 - introducing new information in ways that the students find engaging and motivating, thereby increasing their interest in their lessons.
- Extend the partnership work between home and college to improve attendance, particularly for those students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The standards reached by students in English and mathematics have increased every year for the last three years. The school has been very successful in narrowing the gaps in attainment between students supported through the pupil premium and their peers. In both English and mathematics, their standards have moved from two grades below other students in 2011 to almost the same grade in 2012.
- Students, including those eligible for the pupil premium and those taking alternative courses away from the college, make good progress in a broad range of subjects. The college regularly assesses each student, and this information is used by faculty leaders to decide where to place additional support. The college's commitment to equality of opportunity is very strong and the considerable additional intervention and support put in place for underachieving students ensure all groups make good progress.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make good progress. This is because the college has carefully selected subjects that suit the needs of the students and provides additional support in lessons from a team of teaching assistants with good subject knowledge.
- This year the college has decided to put a small group of students forward early for GCSE mathematics. Students who take the examinations early will continue to study mathematics and sit the examination again at the end of the year. Teachers have given careful consideration to this decision and believe it will increase the confidence and examination skills of the target group of middle-ability students.
- Students work hard and participate enthusiastically in most lessons. They develop skills in writing, communication and mathematics across a wide range of subjects.
- Students in the sixth form make good progress from their starting points. They are given good guidance about the courses that would be suitable for them and this means the number of students in Year 12 who continue their studies into Year 13 is above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good teaching, and much that is outstanding, means that students learn at good pace. Teachers use a variety of different activities within the lesson, including group work and discussions. These, coupled with teachers' good subject knowledge, engage students well. Teachers' probing questioning helps students understand complex new ideas quickly.
- Students have good opportunities to work independently and, on occasions, write at length. This was particularly evident in science lessons where students received considerable advice and guidance on writing longer answers in examination-style questions.
- Teachers use a wide range of techniques to check students' understanding of the work, including questioning, quizzes and puzzles and mini whiteboards. In a Year 10 science lesson, computers were effectively used to help students rapidly summarise the key points of their discussion and analysis.
- Teachers' marking is consistently strong across all subjects. It gives students detailed feedback

on how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve their work. Students also benefit from sharply focused comments and guidance given by teachers during lessons.

- Some outstanding teaching was highly successful in motivating students. In a Year 10 French lesson, students took rapid turns developing a sentence and passing it on to the next group to complete. As a result the students made outstanding progress, producing high quality extended sentences. In a Year 13 revision lesson, students thoroughly enjoyed acting out their learning on coastal erosion as they became human waves.
- Classroom environments, particularly in art and design technology and modern foreign languages, are highly stimulating and provide excellent reinforcement of current learning. Literacy is a strong focus of wall displays, with highly visible key words and technical terms.
- A small amount of teaching requires improvement. This is sometimes because the work was not well enough matched to the different ability levels of all students in the class. In these lessons, students continued with their work but did not make as much progress as they could have done because their tasks were either too difficult or too easy. In other cases, students make less progress because the teaching does not engage their interest and they become bored or distracted.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good. Teachers are well qualified in their specialist areas but are not always using this detailed subject knowledge to stretch and challenge the most-able students.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The majority of parents, carers, staff and students confirm that good behaviour seen during the inspection is the norm, as do the college's records. Around the college, students behave in a supportive, mature and responsible manner so that breaks and lunchtimes are calm and orderly.
 - Systems for dealing with the rare instances of misbehaviour have been strengthened following consultation with staff and students. As a result, a consistently applied system of rewards and sanctions gives students a clear understanding of how they are expected to behave at all times. Fixed-term exclusions, which were already low, continue to fall.
 - Students have very positive attitudes to their learning. They are keen to do well and enjoy working collaboratively. They have shown considerable maturity in dealing with the recent introduction of a college uniform and a more formal system for addressing staff. They are friendly, polite and were keen to share their views of the college with the inspection team.
 - Students say they feel safe in college and bullying of any form is very uncommon. Reported incidents are dealt with immediately and firmly. Students are well informed on how to stay safe and understand the harm that racist or homophobic name-calling can cause. Students also know how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.
 - Attendance is improving and is currently in line with national averages for 14 to 19 schools. The college carefully monitors attendance of different groups of students. The current gap in attendance between students supported through the pupil premium and others is slowly closing. This is due to an increasing focus on attendance and well-considered help and guidance from the attendance support team.
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- Behaviour in the sixth form is outstanding. Students are highly motivated, mature and set an excellent role model for younger students.

The leadership and management are good

- The principal, supported by the senior leadership team, has been very successful in developing a shared strategic vision among staff and students and has an uncompromising ambition for better outcomes for students.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and the school's performance are very effective. Senior and faculty leaders regularly observe lessons, analyse students' academic and personal progress, and look at students' work in books. As a result, leaders have a good awareness of the college's strengths and weaknesses. The outcomes of this quality assurance work lead to sharply focused actions for improvement. College and faculty improvement plans are carefully aligned so that areas for further development are clear to all staff.
- Senior leaders have already demonstrated considerable effectiveness in improving teaching and learning. Appraisal systems are carefully managed with demanding targets and there is an extensive programme of training and coaching to support staff in reaching those targets.
- Staff from Groby regularly visit students at their high schools to ensure they are well-prepared to make their subject choices in Year 10. The range of available subjects and courses has undergone considerable change to ensure they motivate and engage all students.
- The school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Students have many opportunities to work with their peers in lessons. Teachers create good opportunities for students to bring their own personal reflection to their learning.
- Pupil premium funding is currently used to fund a range of projects including transition from high school, additional teaching in mathematics and English, revision support materials and support for attendance. Senior leaders carefully analyse the impact of this funding. All of this has helped to improve the progress made by eligible students, but their attendance is still not rising rapidly enough.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors demonstrate a great commitment to the college and have an extensive range of personal skills and professional expertise. They ensure that statutory requirements, including those for safeguarding students, are met. They have a clear understanding of how well pupils are performing and ensure that the arrangements for checking and improving teaching are thorough. They check that teachers' pay rises are linked closely to students' achievement and the quality of teaching. Members of the finance committee play a key role in deciding college spending priorities and understand, for example, the importance of carefully spending pupil premium funds to close gaps in achievement and attendance for eligible students.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	138627
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	409379

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	14–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	865
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	272
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Evelyne Maher and Geoffrey Goodall
Headteacher	Robert Coles
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0116 287 9921
Fax number	0116 287 0189
Email address	admin@grobycoll.com

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