

# Newmarket College

Exning Road, Newmarket, CB8 0EB

**Inspection dates** 14–15 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>4</b>
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires special measures.

- Students are not doing as well as they should in most subjects. They are not making enough progress because the teaching is inadequate.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations and the learning activities they provide for students do not always match their abilities or build on their previous attainment.
- Marking does not provide enough guidance for students on how to improve their work.
- In many lessons students make slow progress because the teaching does not involve them actively enough in their learning.
- The sixth form is inadequate because the students' achievement and progress are not good enough. Poor attendance and too few chances to develop ways of learning independently are key factors that contribute to students' poor performance.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. Leaders, managers and governors have not focused enough on students' learning by improving all aspects of teaching. Leaders have had too little impact on improving learning and, as a result, students' achievement has declined.

### The school has the following strengths

- Students feel safe and they get on well with each other and the staff.
- Students are polite and helpful to visitors.
- The change of status from a 13 to 19 college to an 11 to 19 college was well planned and carried out.
- A wide range of activities outside lessons, including assemblies, contributes well to students' personal development.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons and six of these were jointly seen with members of the senior leadership team including the principal. In addition, the inspection team made shorter visits to lessons to focus on specific aspects such as the provision for students’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students covering the whole age range of the college.
- Discussions were held with the principal, other senior leaders, those in charge of areas of the school’s work and a representative from the local authority. The lead inspector met with two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors took account of the 105 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers, Parent View, in reaching their findings. They also analysed 32 questionnaire returns from staff.
- The inspection team looked closely at a range of documentation, including information on students’ performance, the college’s own analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, improvement plans, minutes of the strategy accountability group set up by the local authority, safeguarding and behaviour policies, as well as records and documents relating to the targets set for teachers to improve their work.

## Inspection team

Kate Griffin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Ubsdell

Additional Inspector

Gulshanbir Kayembe

Additional Inspector

James McAtear

Additional Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

### Information about this school

- There has been a change in the age range of students as a result of local authority re-organisation from first, middle and upper schools to primary and secondary schools. The introduction of Year 7 and Year 8 students in September 2012 increased the size of the college, but it is still smaller than average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British, but a small minority are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. About two thirds of these students speak English as an additional language.
- A broadly average proportion of students are eligible to be supported by the pupil premium funding. This is extra government funding given to the college on the basis of the numbers of students known to be eligible for free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from service families.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action is smaller than the national average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The college does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for students' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of students attend alternative provision.
- The college has entered into a partnership with Mildenhall College to form the Forest Heath Sixth Form. Students remain on the roll of their original school or college but can attend courses on both sites.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching throughout the school to a level that is good or better by:
  - insisting that teachers' planning is thorough and appropriate for the differing aptitudes and abilities of all students in each class
  - making sure that all teachers have the skills needed to develop students' reading and writing skills in lessons
  - ensuring that teachers provide clear and precise written guidance to students on what they need to do to improve
  - choosing activities that are engaging, exciting and provide opportunities for students to reflect and to challenge one another
  - ensuring that teachers check how well students are learning in lessons and monitor carefully the time spent on different tasks so that they can move students on as soon as they are ready
  - expecting more of students and, in particular, improving the provision for students who speak English as an additional language and for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Improve students' achievement in English and mathematics by ensuring that lessons develop and consolidate students' literacy and numeracy skills.

- Strengthen the way that leaders and managers improve teaching by making sure that:
  - those who carry out lesson observations know what to look for and provide clear and precise feedback to teachers on what they need to do to improve their teaching
  - the examination courses offered, particularly in the sixth form, suit the capabilities of all students and attract sufficient numbers.
- Improve and ensure regular attendance for all groups of students, including in the sixth form.
- Develop the skills and abilities of faculty leaders so that they are able to undertake their leadership and management roles effectively by:
  - making sure they use the information they gather during monitoring activities to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching
  - ensuring that they check how well any new initiative is being implemented and that it is having the expected impact on the learning of all groups of students
  - ensuring they hold staff in their faculties to account for the performance of their students and make sure that these staff know what to do if any of their students are underperforming.

Newly qualified teachers should not be appointed.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is inadequate

- Standards are too low and in 2012 only half of the students made the expected progress in English and just over a third made the expected progress in mathematics.
- The proportion of students gaining five good GCSE passes including English and mathematics has been significantly below national averages for the last three years and although it improved in 2011, it dropped back substantially in 2012. GCSE attainment was exceptionally low in mathematics and significantly below national averages in many other subjects, including science.
- The current performance of students in Year 11 indicates that the college is unlikely to meet the government's floor standard in 2013.
- Students start the college with attainment that is well below average. Many arrive with literacy skills that are poorly developed for their age. Until very recently insufficient emphasis has been placed on boosting these important skills to help students make faster progress in other subjects.
- Students supported by the pupil premium gained much lower average point scores than other students. The college has developed strategies to ensure that they complete their courses, but the strategies planned to raise their achievement have yet to have enough impact and close the gap on their fellow students.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make significantly less progress than similar students in other schools, although their scores are better than those of their classmates.
- While disabled students and those who have special educational needs receive some support that helps their learning, their achievement is inadequate overall because their needs are not met well enough in lessons. Teaching assistants give good support to students with physical disabilities when involved in practical activities. Assistants are less effective when supporting students to complete their written work themselves.
- Inadequate progress is widespread throughout the college, because too little account has been taken of students' individual abilities and starting points. Although a new monitoring and evaluation structure has been introduced it has yet to demonstrate significant impact.
- Overall achievement in the sixth form is inadequate. Performance in AS and A levels is low and has declined over a three year period particularly in relation to the percentage of A\* to B grades. Despite recent improvements, particularly in matching courses to students' abilities, their attainment remains low and progress too variable, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- In some cases students who speak English as an additional language repeat Year 12 to develop their higher-level literacy skills, but no additional support is provided for these students to help them with their language skills.
- Students' skills in working independently are not developed well enough to support study in the sixth form and in future life.

- Early entries to examinations are rare and do not have any negative impact on results.

### **The quality of teaching is inadequate**

- Teaching is inadequate because students are not making enough progress in all subjects, and students cannot read and write as well as they should.
- Teachers expect too little of the students and the learning activities are not well enough matched to the capabilities or prior attainment of the students. Those who speak English as an additional language are often taught in lower ability sets because of their language skills rather than being placed in sets that match their capabilities in different subjects. In many lessons students are expected simply to absorb information that teachers provide and there are too few opportunities for students to get actively involved in their learning through, for example, working with others to solve problems.
- Too often students are engaged in routine tasks that do not encourage them to think for themselves or to develop skills such as analysis and evaluation. Students themselves commented that not enough attention was given to 'the ways some of us learn'. Lesson observations and a scrutiny of work in students' books indicated that a lot of work is done on work sheets which they then stick into their books. This does not develop students' skills in writing independently or encourage good presentation.
- The work provided for students is not well enough adapted to their abilities and more-able students are rarely set work that is hard enough. In lessons, students are not always able to explain the purpose or background to their work.
- In a large majority of lessons the pace of learning is too slow.
- Teachers too often give a task and then leave students to do it without specifying a completion time or intervening to encourage students to work briskly. Teachers do not use questioning well enough to develop students' thinking or to extend their responses. On occasion, weaker teaching in lower-ability groups leads to poor behaviour.
- The quality of teachers' marking seen in students' books is inadequate. Too often it is superficial so students do not know what steps they need to take to improve their work.
- In the more effective lessons teachers aim high and make strenuous efforts to help students enjoy their lessons while working hard. In these lessons teachers adapt tasks and use methods that meet students' different capabilities. Clear explanations are given about what students need to do to be successful. Teachers check that students understand the tasks and encourage them to ask for help when they need it. Students enjoy these lessons and learn well in them. Not enough teaching is of this quality.
- In the sixth form there is not enough good or outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide a lot of feedback to the students. However, teaching does not help students sufficiently to think for themselves and this limits their progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement**

- Behaviour and safety require improvement because some students do not always pay attention or become actively involved in lessons. Attendance, although improving, remains too low and

persistent absence rates are too high.

- Students' behaviour around the college is generally good. Students are friendly and they get on well with each other. The college has successfully improved relationships between students over the past few years.
- Students feel safe in the college. They have a clear understanding of how to keep safe, including when using computers and on the internet.
- Students say that the college deals effectively and challenges all types of bullying including racist and other types of name-calling.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions is high. However, the steps taken recently to address these have been successful and the numbers have dropped significantly this year. There have not been any recent permanent exclusions.
- When teachers make the lessons interesting and ensure that everyone in the group understands what is being taught, students respond with good levels of attention and enthusiasm.
- Occasionally students disrupt learning. This happens where teaching is weak, such as in lower-ability mathematics groups or where a teacher is unfamiliar with the group or inexperienced.
- Attendance in the sixth form is very low. Students have not been supported in developing their independent study skills and are not working as hard as they should be when not in lessons.

### **The leadership and management are inadequate**

- Too many weaknesses in leadership mean that the college is not improving at the pace required. In part, progress has been slow due to the change of character of the college.
- The management structure has been changed and faculty leaders have been introduced to try to ensure consistent expectations and evaluations throughout the college. Many faculty leaders are new to their posts and the programmes they have introduced have yet to have an impact on students' learning.
- Inspectors observed a lack of consistency in the application of school policies both within and between faculties. This view was confirmed by over half of the staff who returned their questionnaires.
- The principal has a clear view of the way forward and he is well aware of the enormous task ahead. He has made some tough decisions in relation to staffing, but has not secured the support of the staff. The questionnaires indicated that a significant number of staff do not understand the college's direction for development or agree that leadership and management are good. A small minority of parents and carers were of the same view.
- The college's lesson observation records showed variable quality in the feedback to staff on their teaching and a lack of consistency in the standards of teaching expected and the targets set.
- The principal and deputy principal have challenged poor performance, but with limited effect on the overall quality of teaching. This is because they have not ensured that other leaders, such as heads of faculty, take enough of a role in holding staff to account for their performance. Pay

progression has been withheld in some cases where teachers have failed to demonstrate satisfactory progress in their performance management reviews.

- The principal and governors were able to explain how the pupil premium has been spent. They have added to the amount allocated in order to increase the number of students benefitting from these activities. Leaders evaluate that pupil premium funding has had a significant impact on reducing the number of pupils with no employment or training opportunities.
- The strategic management of additional support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs is inadequate and it is hard to demonstrate the effectiveness of the provision, including that for those educated off site. There is an over-reliance upon the two leaders who are responsible for managing provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and too little emphasis is placed on sharing relevant data to check how much progress these students make.
- The college meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding students.
- The arrangement for a joint sixth form helps to promote a wider range of courses for students. However, many A-level courses have very small numbers and this makes them expensive to run. Classes of only one, two or three students also mean that opportunities for sharing ideas are very limited.
- The high quality displays evident throughout the college demonstrate a clear commitment to the social, moral and spiritual aspects of learning. However, there was little evidence of this influencing the work undertaken in lessons. A wide range of sporting and performing arts activities makes a good contribution to students' personal development. Sixth-form students in particular were very positive about the opportunities they had to widen their experiences through out-of-school activities.
- The local authority has been very supportive particularly since the disappointing results of 2012. They have formed a strategic accountability group and the English, mathematics and science advisers have visited the college. However, the support has not had a discernible impact on teaching or outcomes for students.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is improving and recent changes to the governing body have strengthened its leadership. Governors are well aware that the college's current performance is inadequate both in terms of the quality of teaching and students' performance, and are holding the principal and senior team to account for weaknesses in the college's provision. They have worked with the local authority to seek ways to secure the much-needed improvements and have taken the decision to seek Academy status in order to support the college still further. The principal and the governors considered very carefully their choice of sponsor in order to ensure their strategic vision for the college was fulfilled. Governors are given detailed information concerning the college's finances and in particular they are involved in discussions concerning pay progression for staff and the spending of pupil premium funding.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124804
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	406273

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	782
<b>Of which, number on roll in sixth form</b>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vernon Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Robert Cadwalladr
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01638 664412
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