

Tendring Technology College

Rochford Way, Frinton-on-Sea, CO13 0AZ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- The headteacher’s leadership is excellent. She works successfully with governors and other leaders to raise standards and improve students’ progress.
- Leaders provide effective training to improve the quality of teaching.
- The sixth form is outstanding. Students make excellent progress because teaching is of a very high quality.
- Students reach well above-average standards and make excellent progress because teaching is outstanding at all stages throughout the college.
- Students’ behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes to work and learning are exemplary.
- Students say they enjoy college immensely, and have excellent social skills that prepare them extremely well for life when they leave college.
- Students feel safe in college. They say that bullying is unheard of, but, if it should happen, that they and staff would deal with it swiftly and effectively.
- Teachers usually provide students with outstanding academic help and guidance.
- On rare occasions, work is not challenging enough, and, sometimes, teachers do not check that students’ work is neat enough for it to be helpful in revising for examinations.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 49 teachers in 49 lessons or parts of lessons. Three of these observations were shared with senior leaders to determine how accurately they evaluate teaching.
- Meetings were held with staff, students, parents and governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined documents about the school’s work, including information about the achievement of students, development planning and the school’s own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses.
- Inspectors took account of the 143 responses to the Parent View online questionnaire, and the college’s own survey of parents’ and carers views. It also considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Edward Wheatley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Edwin Powell	Additional Inspector
Angela Podmore	Additional Inspector
Brenda Watson	Additional Inspector
Josephine Lewis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The college is larger than most secondary schools.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is well below average, and no students are at the early stages of learning English.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average. This is additional government funding for students looked after by the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and others.
- A small number of students are partly educated offsite at Otley College, Tendring Studio School or Catton College to provide them with opportunities to gain work-related qualifications.
- The college occupies two main sites that are approximately five miles apart. It has also acquired a building separate from the main sites where a small number of students receive part of their education.
- The college takes a small number of students into its sixth form from other schools, and some of its Year 11 students go to other schools for their sixth form education.
- The college is an academy. It is sponsored by the Greensward Charitable Trust and is part of the Academies Enterprise Trust (AET).
- The headteacher provides support for other schools in the authority, and in the AET, particularly in the areas of leadership.
- The college has a specialism in technology.
- The college meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the quality of teaching even more by making sure that in every lesson:
 - work is always matched precisely to the learning needs of students
 - students write neatly so that when they refer back to their work in the future in order to revise, they understand what they have written.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Standards are well above average and have risen steadily in recent years. Students make outstanding progress from broadly average attainment on entry to the college. Students' highly positive attitudes to learning, in both the main college and sixth form, contribute significantly to their outstanding achievement.
- The proportion of students attaining five or more GCSE grades A* to C was well above average in 2012 and the standard attained in 2013 was equally impressive. The proportion achieving the highest A* to A grades is higher than in recent years. The most able students achieve exceptionally well.
- Students read extremely well. Their written work is usually detailed and accurate.
- Students have above-average mathematical skills. They calculate accurately and use a wide range of graphs and charts to illustrate their mathematical skills extremely well. Standards in mathematics were previously lower than in English, but the reasons for this were quickly identified and the improvements made have led to a rapid rise in levels of attainment.
- A small proportion of students take their English and mathematics GCSE examinations early. Many of them do well, reaching A* and A grades, and then continue with sixth form courses in English or mathematics. Those who are not so successful continue with the GCSE courses and take the examinations again at the end of Year 11. The college's approach to early entry is helpful to students, including the most able.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. Teachers and support staff provide exceptionally effective individual help. This enables students to make fast progress and to gain confidence in their own abilities to do well.
- Students who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress because their learning needs are closely checked, and individual support provided to make sure that they learn as successfully as other students.
- The few students whose circumstances make them vulnerable who are taught in a separate building make extremely good progress. They receive expert help where they need it, specialist subject teaching and sensitive support that successfully builds their confidence in their own abilities and helps them to gain social skills so that they can learn with other students.
- Some students arrive in Year 7 with poor English and mathematical skills, and they receive effective short-term support that helps them catch up quickly to the levels at which they should be achieving.
- Those students in Years 10 and 11 who follow work-related courses with a range of offsite providers achieve well and gain very good results in the examinations they take.
- Students supported by the pupil premium funding make excellent progress. Funding is used exceptionally well to support individual and small groups of students, and to provide them with extra learning materials if they need them. These students entered Year 7 over two terms behind other students in English and mathematics. The gap narrowed and, by the time they left Year 11 in 2013, there was little difference between the levels of attainment they reached and

the levels reached by other students. In the current Year 11, many of these students are in classes for those of high ability and achieve extremely well, sustaining the improvement in progress made in 2013, and the steady improvement of recent years.

- Students in the sixth form make excellent progress. They did well in the 2012 and 2013 A-level examinations. Attainment in the 2013 AS examinations improved significantly from 2012, when it dipped to below average, but students' current attainment is well above average. Students taking Level 3 vocational (BTEC) courses did especially well in 2012 and again in 2013. The small numbers of students following applied A- and AS-level courses are making excellent progress and this is a significant improvement from 2012 results achieved. The small numbers of students studying offsite make extremely good progress and achieve well.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- In the great majority of lessons, teachers provide challenging work based on accurate assessment of students' abilities and progress. Teachers provide demanding extension activities for the most able students and carefully planned support for those who learn more slowly, so that all achieve as well as they can.
- The pace of learning in lessons is usually fast. Lessons include a wide range of activities that catch and keep all students' attention and interest.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent and contributes considerably to the wide range of activities and challenging work in lessons.
- In lessons leading towards examinations, teachers give students examples of examination questions and provide excellent guidance on how to understand what examiners are testing and how to produce accurate answers.
- In almost all lessons, teachers ask demanding questions. They encourage students to give full and accurate answers and require them to explain their understanding and knowledge as clearly as they can.
- Most lessons include opportunities for students to work together, to make decisions about what they learn and to present their findings to the class. This practice encourages exceptionally constructive working relationships and makes sure that students collaborate and evaluate the quality of their work. Consequently, students' moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well.
- Teachers promote the development of students' English, mathematical and computer skills exceptionally well. Students are expected to explain their knowledge and understanding in both speech and writing in all subjects, and to use to use numerical information, graphs and charts, and use computers to extend their knowledge wherever possible.
- Teachers and learning-support assistants work very closely together. Assistants are very effective. Both teachers and assistants use their knowledge of students' progress, and of any emotional and social difficulties that students may have, to provide exceptionally high-quality support for disabled students and those who have special educational needs, and for students supported through the pupil premium funding. They make sure that students have opportunities to work independently and with others, and to explain what they are learning to adults and each other, so that they make extremely good progress.

- Teachers assess students' progress regularly and accurately. They involve students in assessing their own and each other's work, and provide careful guidance to help them to do this well.
- Teachers' marking of students' work is exceptionally helpful. It give students a very clear picture of how well they are doing, how to improve their work and what the next steps in learning are. Students know what they need to do to improve their work. Those taking examinations at the end of the year know what they must do to at least reach their expected grades.
- In a very few lessons, work is sometimes not fully matched to the learning needs of all students. Very occasionally, teachers do not check that a very small number of students' written work is presented neatly enough for it to be easily read for revision purposes at a later date. Nevertheless, the great majority of students are highly responsive to the teaching they receive and are diligent in the neatness and careful way they produce work.
- Teaching in the sixth form is outstanding. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and make sure that students discuss their work so that they become independent, critical learners. Teachers keep students well informed about how well they are making progress, and give excellent advice and direction on how to improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour and attitudes of students are outstanding. Students are exceptionally keen to learn and to do well. They concentrate unflinchingly well in lessons, ask questions when they do not understand, and do their best at all times.
- Relationships among students and between students and adults are excellent. They are based on trust and respect, and students know that, whenever they need help, adults will give up their time to help them. Students work together and help and support each other exceptionally well. They are impressively polite and helpful to visitors.
- Students take an active part in the wide range of musical, artistic, sporting and social activities that the college organises. These additional learning opportunities contribute extremely well to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Students have an excellent understanding of the different forms of bullying. In particular, they are aware of the dangers of cyber-bullying, and know they can turn to any adult for help if they should need to. They also have their own network of friends, who are ready to help if needed. However, they say they cannot recall any incidents of bullying.
- Students know how to stay safe. They work safely with glassware in laboratories, for example, and move around the buildings carefully and with respect for each other.
- Attendance has improved rapidly in recent years. The great majority of students have high levels of attendance. The college is rigorous in encouraging regular attendance and works determinedly with outside agencies to reduce absence, especially to persuade families to avoid holidays in term time. The college has had success in explaining the value of the excellent education provided for their children to the small number of families whose children are persistently absent.
- Sixth form students' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and contribute much to their impressive achievement. They have extremely positive opinions about the college, and are

particularly appreciative of the time teachers give to support them. They take on important roles in the college to promote enrolment on sixth form courses and to act as guides to visitors. They work together extremely well.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher directs college improvement with great energy and clear perception of priorities. She is exceptionally well supported by other leaders and staff in making sure that the college continues its momentum to further improvement.
- Leaders have eliminated inadequate teaching. They have worked very effectively to improve teaching from good to outstanding. They are supported effectively in this improvement by a group of students who have been trained in lesson observations, and who feedback to teachers on the quality of teaching seen. This initiative has had a considerable beneficial impact on teaching quality and added to the sense of working together for the good of this very large college community.
- Training and support for teachers are extremely good, and teachers are keen to improve. Teachers know their targets to help them improve their practice. Targets relate to students achieving the progress that they should, to teachers developing their professional skills, and to college priorities. Training and support for subject leaders and others in leadership posts is extremely good and is contributing effectively to the improvements in teaching, and the rise in standards throughout the college.
- Leaders at all levels have an excellent grasp of what the college needs to do sustain and improve the attainment of students. Highly effective action was taken to deal with the fall in standards in mathematics and, currently, the small proportion of persistent absence is reducing.
- Leadership of the sixth form is outstanding. Leaders acted swiftly to reverse a downward dip in AS examination results. They make sure that the courses provided for students are closely matched to their individual needs.
- The college manages its curriculum particularly well. Links between the two main sites are exceptionally good so that students experience extremely helpful continuity in their education. There is a wide programme of trips, including: visits to universities, residential trips, art and drama events. The rich learning opportunities students receive in the college promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well and ensure their attitudes to learning are highly positive.
- The curriculum is extensive and is carefully organised to meet students' academic, emotional, future career and personal needs. The college provides an individually planned programme of work-related courses and makes very good use of the provision at local colleges to support this. Leaders and managers check thoroughly that the courses are suitable for each student and the quality of provision and safeguarding meet the college's own rigorous standards.
- The college's specialism in technology plays a key part in ensuring that students have ready access to good-quality computers, which enhance their experience of information and communication technology, as well as learning in other subjects. Students receive exceptionally helpful educational and vocational guidance in taking their next steps at age 16 and 18.
- Sixth form students have the opportunity to undertake some courses in other institutions and extend their experience beyond their home town before going to university.

- The college maintains strong links with the local authority, particularly in confirming the accuracy of its self-evaluation. It also provides valuable support for other schools and academies in the AET, especially in developing teaching skills, improving science provision, and promoting better subject-leadership skills.
- The great majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the college. They consider that the college keeps them very well informed through frequent newsletters and emails. They feel that it does its best to make sure that their children are successful. They say it supports them and their children extremely well, and that it responds immediately to any concerns they have.
- The college successfully promotes high levels of achievement by all students. It is effective in eliminating all forms of discrimination and in promoting enjoyment in learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very well informed and supports the headteacher and staff very well. Governors have clear understanding of how well students achieve compared with students in other schools nationally, and about any differences that emerge in attainment between different subjects. They check how well students' progress improves and challenge the headteacher over what is being done to ensure that standards rise. Governors control how funds are spent, and have a good understanding, for example, of the positive impact on the progress made by students supported through pupil premium funding. Governors know about the quality of teaching. They check leaders' monitoring of teachers' professional practice and make sure that increases in salaries are linked to teachers' performance management targets. Governors meet their responsibilities in ensuring that national safeguarding requirements are met, and that staff are thoroughly checked before taking up their appointments.

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	137188
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	419853

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
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	1925
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	374
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Cains
Headteacher	Caroline Haynes
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
Telephone number	01255 672116
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