

# Springwell Community College

Middlecroft Road, Staveley, Chesterfield, S43 3NQ

**Inspection dates** 12–13 February 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students do not make consistently good progress in all subjects. Attainment in science is too low. Though students' achievement is improving in mathematics, standards remain low.
- The quality of teaching varies too much. Teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- Not all teachers properly apply the college's behaviour policy. As a result, low-level disruption affects students' learning in some lessons.
- Boys, and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, do not attain as well as they should. Low-ability students do not make enough progress.
- Leaders have not focused enough on raising the achievement of those groups of students who should be doing better.
- Governors do not closely monitor the targets set to improve the performance of teachers on upper pay scales.

### The school has the following strengths

- The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, improved dramatically in 2013 and is now in line with the national average.
- Achievement in English is good.
- Students' attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Leaders take a strong anti-bullying stance. As a result, students say they feel very safe at the college.
- The governing body has organised a review of its performance so that governors can better support and challenge senior leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 38 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and subject leaders, groups of students, the Chair and three other members of the Governing Body, and spoke with a representative from the county council who supports the college’s work.
- Inspectors considered the views of the 25 parents who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, and the college’s own surveys of parents. They analysed the results of the 69 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at the college’s data on students’ progress, lesson plans, minutes of meetings and records relating to behaviour, safety and attendance. They also reviewed the college’s checks on how well it is doing and college improvement plans.

## Inspection team

Lisa Fraser, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Richard White

Additional Inspector

Gwendoline Onyon

Additional Inspector

Mark Mitchley

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The college is smaller than most secondary schools.
- Almost all students are from White British backgrounds.
- Very few students speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or who have a parent in the armed services, is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than average.
- The college has an arts specialism.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2013.
- Twelve students in Years 10 and 11 spend part of their time studying at Chesterfield College and Groundwork Cresswell, an alternative education provider.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and hence achievement, especially in mathematics and science, by ensuring that:
  - teachers provide activities which motivate students and excite their curiosity, especially in science
  - there is the right balance of support and challenge for low-ability students and disabled students and those who have special educational needs
  - all teachers have high expectations of behaviour and how much work students should complete in a lesson.
- Improve the quality of leadership at all levels by ensuring that:
  - leaders focus closely on the achievement of different groups of students, including boys and disabled students and those who have special educational needs to ensure that all students achieve well
  - all teachers implement the college's behaviour policy
  - the performance targets for teachers on upper pay scales are carefully set and monitored by leaders at all levels
  - that senior, subject and other leaders understand how to accurately judge when teaching is good or outstanding
  - the recommendations from the external review of governance are implemented.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not all students do make consistently good progress, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Students start at the college with below-average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, the proportion of Year 11 students gaining five or more passes at GCSE A\* to C grades, including English and mathematics, improved dramatically and was in line with the national average. Nevertheless, not all students are yet making the progress they should in all key subjects.
- In mathematics, students' attainment is rising but their rates of progress are still lower than those expected nationally. Few students make better than expected progress because the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Students are no longer entered early for their GCSE examination in mathematics as this has not proved successful in the past.
- Students' achievement in science has been too low over time. Leaders identify particular issues with the quality of teaching in biology and physics. More-able students achieve less well in science than in other subjects although, overall, across the full range of subjects, they achieve as well as their peers nationally.
- The Year 7 'catch-up' funding has not been effective in raising standards. Not all students supported by the funding are making rapid enough progress in improving their literacy.
- Leaders identify the achievement of boys and disabled students and those who have special educational needs as requiring improvement. Leaders have not yet been successful in narrowing the gap in attainment between boys and girls. Disabled students and those who have special educational needs currently make broadly average progress. Low-ability students achieve less well than similar students nationally.
- Pupil premium funding is spent on a number of initiatives, including subsidising college visits and particular courses such as land-based studies and outdoor education. College data indicates that students eligible for this additional funding were about half a GCSE grade behind their classmates in mathematics and nearly a grade lower in English in 2013. The gap in their attainment in mathematics reduced in 2013 because leaders organised good support led by higher level teaching assistants.
- In English, students' rates of progress have been consistently better than that expected nationally because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. The school's projections for the current Year 11 indicate that students will continue to achieve better results in English than in mathematics. Leaders' tracking of other year groups indicates that the college's improved GCSE results in 2013 are expected to be sustained.
- Students make good progress in art, drama and music, reflecting well on the college's specialism.
- A small number of Key Stage 4 students study off-site for part of their learning with other providers on Level 1 courses. Their attendance and progress is monitored closely by college leaders to ensure they achieve well, which they do.

**The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- The overall quality of teaching requires improvement because students are not making the progress they should, particularly in mathematics and science. During the inspection, not enough lessons were good or outstanding.
- Teaching is not consistently effective because, in some lessons, especially in science, teachers' expectations of what students can achieve are not high enough and the work set is too easy.
- Activities do not always engage students and stimulate their curiosity. For low-ability students, this sometimes results in poor behaviour. In some cases lack of support from teaching staff to help them to complete their work or manage their behaviour leads to ineffective learning for this group.
- Some teachers have low expectations of students' behaviour and, as a result, students say poor behaviour in a few classes hinders their learning.
- The quality of marking is variable across different subjects. In the vast majority of subjects, especially in English, teachers' comments clearly identify what students need to do to improve. Students respond to these comments by correcting and amending their work. While, in mathematics, there has been inconsistency in the frequency of teachers' marking and the quality of guidance for improvement, these are being tackled effectively and are improving.
- Where learning is effective relationships are positive and teachers have high expectations. Teachers use questioning well to probe students for more detailed answers and to check their understanding. Students make good progress as a result of the imaginative activities planned by teachers. For example, students in a Year 11 English lesson made outstanding progress in their understanding of how to create an effective non-fiction text as a result of the teacher's well-chosen resources which prompted interested discussion.
- Students develop good social skills and co-operate exceptionally well together when asked to work in pairs or groups. The quality of support students receive from teaching assistants is usually good.

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

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Not all teachers consistently apply the college's behaviour policy, which means that they allow students to interrupt or go off task.
- The majority of students have positive attitudes to learning and are respectful of each other and staff. Where the quality of teaching is good, students' behaviour is also good. However, a sizeable minority of students are not as motivated as they need to be to achieve well.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average as a result of leaders' good efforts to explain the benefits of regular attendance to students.
- The college's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The college site is very secure and parents and students agree they are safe at school. The college also ensures that students who go off site to study are kept safe.

- The college's behaviour improvement centre makes a positive contribution to supporting students who may experience challenging behaviour. As a result, fixed-term exclusions and persistent absence are lower than average. Good links with outside agencies provide students who need this with strong levels of care and support.
- Students have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, including that based on racism and homophobia. Leaders take bullying seriously and the college's anti-bullying ambassadors spoke enthusiastically to inspectors about their work and how it has helped them to be more assertive and to empathise with their peers. One student commented, 'You change a lot yourself because you're helping other people overcome their problems.'
- Around the college and in the canteen, students show respect for their environment. There is very little litter, classrooms are tidy and work on display is attractive and well-maintained.

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leaders have brought about some key improvements in students' attainment which rose dramatically overall in 2013. However, students' achievement in mathematics and science is too low and several groups of students, particularly boys, low-ability students and disabled students and those who have special educational needs, are failing to make the progress they should.
- While leaders are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all, and some gaps in the achievement of different groups are narrowing, outcomes are not equally good for all groups of students. Leaders at all levels, including subject leaders, have not scrutinised data on students' progress sufficiently rigorously to ascertain trends and patterns and to take quick action to secure good achievement for all.
- While joint observations during the inspection indicated that senior leaders are accurate in their evaluations of teaching, school records show that too many of the lessons observed by senior and subject leaders have been judged to be outstanding. This gives the school an unrealistic picture of the quality of teaching.
- Under the leadership of the new headteacher, college improvement plans identify the main issues which have held the college back. Attainment in mathematics is rising and leaders recognise that teachers in different subjects need support to develop their behaviour strategies, with a review of the behaviour policy scheduled for later this year. These demonstrate that the college has the capacity to improve.
- Leadership to improve teaching and learning is strong and has helped to effect the improvements in students' examination results. Subject and other leaders speak positively about the quality of training sessions which have improved teachers' skills. Inspectors observed evidence of this in teachers' good use of questioning. A number of leaders benefit from national training schemes to develop their leadership skills.
- The courses of study broadly match the range of students' abilities. New approaches, such as project management in Year 7, aim to improve students' literacy, numeracy and thinking skills but students' experiences are variable, depending on their teacher. Students in Key Stage 3 have the opportunity to study three languages but some say they find this confusing. In Year 11, students have a good understanding of the range of opportunities post-16 as a result of the independent careers information they receive.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the good range

of opportunities presented to students by the arts specialism. Assemblies draw students' attention to current affairs and strong, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in humanities helps students to reflect on issues such as the morality of war. Students are often supportive of each other's learning. For example, inspectors observed Year 9 students making a significant difference to younger students' literacy skills during a peer-reading session.

- Good support from the county council has supported improvements in mathematics but there is more work to do to improve standards further.
- Inspectors explored issues around students' safety with senior leaders. At the time of the inspection no evidence was found to indicate that students are not safe and therefore safeguarding requirements are met.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are committed to the college and have recently commissioned an external review to identify how they can offer improved support and challenge to college leaders. Governors have a good understanding of published data, such as the *Data Dashboard*, and know how the college performs in comparison with other secondary schools nationally. Governors know about the quality of teaching and are very clear about which areas require improvement. They have a strong grasp of how additional funding is spent and identify that some groups of students are not achieving as well as others. Governors ensure that teachers' pay rises are linked to students' good achievement. However, they recognise that not enough has been asked of teachers on upper pay scales because they and school leaders are not monitoring the performance of this group of staff closely enough. The governing body is keen to develop its membership to include a wider range of skills and backgrounds.

## 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>	112966
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	429526

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>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	835
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kay Bonnett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ian Wingfield
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 473873
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